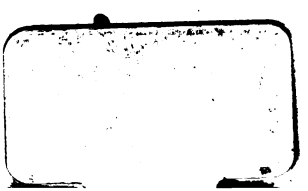

FORTY YEARS IN THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

Forty Years in the Argentine Republic

By
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London:
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
Buenos Aires:
MITCHELL'S BOOK STORE
—
1907

Dedication.

To my infinitely "Sweeter Self," who has put up with me during more than two decades, and still has to "face the music," this book is inscribed in loving sympathy.

A. E. S.

Forty Years in the Argentine Republic.

Chapter I.

I leave England in 1864—Buenos Aires—Rosario—Central Argentine Railway—The early worm—How not to do it—"Tenderfoot"—The last of the cavaliers (The Gaucho)—Frayle Muerto—The Paraguayan War—I peg-in—The "light fantastic"—Our American cousin—The Indians—Black-eyed Susan.

THE Rio de la Plata (Silver River), strangely translated into the "River Plate," was considered as one of the "Brazils" when an old friend of my father's offered to take me, at the age of 16, out there and "make a man of me," as the saying goes.

At that age a girl is becoming charming and a boy a nuisance at home, and I was delighted

to enter the ring as a young bear. In my case the troubles before me were not to be very serious, yet certainly more kicks than halfpence were my lot during twenty-five years.

On July 9th, 1864, I left England *viâ* Liverpool. The regular steam service in those days consisted solely of the Royal Mail, and steamers had to be changed at Rio Janeiro. The charge was £70 for a berth in the aristocratic part of the ship, which was astern, but not at that time over the screw, except in the most modern steamers of the line. When that instrument of torture became the rule, the dignity of the stern cabins obliged people to pay top-price for the most uncomfortable part of the ship. The dining saloon was also situated "aft," with dire results to longshoremen and women.

Twenty-five years afterwards all this was changed, in imitation of the French mail steamers. Old customs die hard with us. Lately, sleeping and dining cars were "discovered" abroad and adopted in England, thereby (in the latter case) supplying material for pictures in the illustrated papers. No doubt some day London will have electric trams to the extent of other cities.

In addition to the Royal Mail there were

a few "tramps" which had some sort of itinerary, and in one of these, called the "Una," we—that is a number of youngsters and an oldster (who afterwards started the flour mill and creamery on the Carcarañal)—were shipped by a firm of contractors whose head was Mr. Brassey of world-wide repute.

By the way, I once met a man who told me that at the commencement of that great man's career, he (Brassey) had desired to buy a stationary engine on credit, but my informant said—as a good joke—that he was not able to oblige him on those terms.

Amongst our passengers was Mr Chamberlain, afterwards manager of the railway in Montevideo. He was a very large man and as amiable as he was big, Alas! all the passengers but one (besides myself) have passed away to the spirit land.

Our passage took forty-two days, although we only touched at the island of St. Vincent and at Montevideo. The sea was calm during the whole voyage and, beyond the then usual visit from Neptune and family, there was no exciting incident.

We learned that in addition to being held under water (in a sail arranged for the purpose)

by Neptune's bairns until we "bubbled," our footing in rum had also to be paid. This evident injustice probably hastened the demise of the ceremony. I never saw or heard of it again.

On arriving at Montevideo we went on shore for a ride on the sands. Most of us had previously had only a limited experience on donkey-back, and our general appearance on horses made the holders of a barricade (a siege of the city being then in progress) smile on the right side, whilst we smiled distinctly on the wrong side of our faces. I remember it appeared a long way to the ground.

All of us had been studying Spanish during the journey, and, on the cargo being "broached," we drew near to the stalwart stevedores to hear, and if possible to understand, the strange lingo. After listening for some time in speechless awe we retired satisfied that never should we obtain proficiency in such a tongue. As a matter of fact we had been listening to a Basque *patois*—a language equalling Welsh in its euphonious sounds.

Buenos Aires was reached two days later and we were transferred to a whale-boat (the land being invisible from our anchorage), and after a fifteen mile sail were passed into a cart

and thence to the mole—a structure celebrated for its man-traps, otherwise holes in its floor. This became classic under the inspiration of our much esteemed Hibernian daily, of which more anon.

Streets paved with petrified kidneys (another *Standard* joke) and one-horse carts with the animal attached to the pole by the belly-band, whereby it was enabled alternatively to pull or push, were the only specialities of the place. It (the method of horse traction) appeared a capital idea.

After interviewing the "Boss" contractor who had kindly taken me in hand, as already mentioned, we were despatched on the following day, by the steamer "Pavon," to Rosario in Santa Fé, which was the terminus of the Central Argentine Railway, in whose service we were engaged.

The earthworks had been started and some twelve miles completed pending the floating of the Company in London. I believe that the contractors took nearly all the shares. In Rosario, reached next day, we found rooms in the Hotel Central kept by a worthy Virginian named Perkins ("Perks" for short), who had left the fatherland some years previously.

"De Wah" was in full swing, and we found ourselves among a mixed company of rather fire-eating South Carolinians, who were mighty handy with their six-shooters; in fact, some shooting, but without evil result, came off in the street shortly after our arrival. The "Wah" was discussed from morning till night by ex-warriors, who sat with their feet on the mouth of the rain-water cistern and imbibed cooling drinks, which were in general request and decidedly necessary. An American who came down to look after our luggage had an altercation with the cart man and fired at him, being afterwards taken into custody. We looked forward to lively episodes in our new home; but they were not realised.

On the following morning we were notified that the office hours were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with interval for breakfast. This obliged us to rise by candle light and reach the office in the dark. This and a sense of ignorance of everything useful were my first lessons in the battle of life. The experience of early rising has lasted me through life, and I recommend the system to employers and employees, especially in hot climates.

There is, for a youngster, a peculiar charm

in a new country and people, and I remember with what astonishment I saw an owl seated at the mouth of a hole on the site of the present terminal station. I thought those birds lived only in barns.

There was also on the said site a small cemetery, where bones stuck out of the coffins, which also became impressed on my memory; and likewise wild verbenas, which seemed passing strange. These are called *Margaritas* by the Spaniards, and I had yet to learn that the latters' ways conform themselves to the ancient proverb: "Everything comes to him that waits."

A jaguar in a cage and some orange trees in the garden alongside the office were rareties; the latter of a much handsomer appearance than the woe-begone specimens I had seen at the Crystal Palace.

Being placed under the chief engineer, Mr. E. Harry Woods—than whom no kinder man ever existed—I commenced to spoil paper and dirty my fingers with Indian ink, preparatory to taking my "first bottle" as a sucking Brunel.

To be paid for this privilege was an almost unheard-of consideration, and I determined to live up to my reputation, and be out "bright

and early." I had to be! Even a baby among nurses has a reputation for being "old-fashioned."

After a month of this life I was added to a surveying party and promoted to the tail end of the chain. Happily for all parties, our chief decided to adopt the metric system, which was followed by all succeeding generations of railway men, who owe much to this small beginning. After forty years' service I have reached the pulling end of that measuring instrument, there being a young bear—in the shape of my "cub" —"a-larning" at the other.

The first thing which happened at our start was that my horse bolted with me from the office door, and was only brought up by a *Chasque* when a long way clear of the town. I don't think I caused a good impression to our fifteen gaucho peons.

At that time there was only one vegetable garden in the town, and our line went through it. As for other cultivation, except a little maize, there was none. Wheat was unheard-of —our flour came from Chile.

The line had been surveyed for on account of the Government, and we had to pick up the line, which had an eighty-mile "straight" on it,

as best we could, there being no land-marks or tracks on the first hundred miles. Our first section was to Frayle Muerto (now Belville), a distance of one hundred and twenty miles.

We had rather a bad time at first, being in our (Argentine) "salad days." Our cook struck, complaining to Mr. Wheelwright, the acting partner of the contractor, that we were "very delicate gentlemen" ("cavaliers" in the Spanish version), and wanted clean plates. Three months later we were glad to eat *Charqui* and its strong smelling fat, with Nature's forks.

We also had an idea that boots had to be cleaned by someone else, but this notion got a short shrift. In a similar period we got down to Basque slippers with rope soles, and then, in my case, to nought. Our second man returned with a bullock's bladder in lieu of hat. Our *menu* was decidedly irregular. At times we had tinned things and dainty drinks, at other times half rations, eked out with fish I caught with an eel spear made out of the chain arrows; and finally, on our return journey, we had nothing but water during forty-eight hours; all through want of knowledge and through being "new chums."

We had fifteen peons, all said to have killed their man in some "scrap"; only the fittest (with a knife) survived in those days. A nicer and quieter set of men I never met, and even under the trying circumstances alluded to, no word of complaint was ever heard. "Mr. Counsel, I wants my rights," would have been the language had we shipped a crew of "lime-juicers"—the American, at that date, for Britishers.

From that day to this I have appreciated the real *gaucho*, and to hear them round the fire, singing and accompanying themselves on a guitar, inventing the stanzas as the song proceeded, or when dancing the *gato* (a step-dance accompanied by a snapping of fingers), one felt that they were far in advance of our rustic labourers. At that time the school board had not come into operation in either country. "Bill Stumps his mark," was all the signature I could get on the monthly pay-sheets—having been named time-keeper and book ditto in addition to my other exalted functions.

Now the *gaucho* smokes a pipe, has given up the sort of kilt (*chiripa*) made of a shawl or *poncho* fastened about his legs, and plays the accordion like the Hallelujah lasses. It

appears a poor exchange. He likewise carries a pistol and a watch, and will soon strike for an "eight-hour day."

At that time the Cañada de Gomez (about forty miles from Rosario) was within the zone subject to monthly inroads by Indians. There were two ranches in the whole valley, and numerous stray pigs among the long rushes of the brook; these were very wild and their flesh uneatable. We were unarmed, except to the extent of one French pistol. I remember Mr. Wheelwright said there was nothing to fear, as the Indians would prefer a fat mare to all our camp.

One day we were surprised by seeing various horsemen passing at a gallop up the valley, shouting to us that the Indians were coming. There was nothing to be done, and we did it; our men, who could have bolted, remained quite quiet, and it turned out to be a false alarm. There were many droves of wild horses and donkeys in the region, and one of these, no doubt, was the cause of the alarm. The Indians were accustomed to approach lying down over the side of their horses so as to resemble these, and were adepts at "surprise parties."

Afterwards we used to hunt these animals on Sundays with *lazo* and *bola*; but no donkey was ever caught by the latter, as on feeling it he immediately stood still, and the weapon dropped off. Why "stupid as a donkey"? A wall-eyed mare was once "roped" and brought into the earthwork camp. She had a "merry eye," which looked backwards, and she threw every native who attempted to mount her. At last an old Chilian, who ladled out the grub, said, "Boys, let me show you how it's done"—and he did, to the discomfiture of the assembled Argentines. Never shall I forget that brute. She stood up straight on her hind legs, then sprang and twisted like a cat in the air, and fell quite over backwards; but the aged one always landed on his feet, and free from the falling body. Finally, she started off at a furious gallop and returned cowed, but only for a time. Later on she was driven with contumely into the wilderness.

Between the Cañada de Gomez and Frayle Muerto there were only four *ranchos*, which were the points on the diligence road passing near our line. The diligence travelled rapidly with three couples of horses and three or six postillions. No harness existed in those times.

The attachments were made from the belly-bands of the saddle, and the speed was about twelve miles per hour, in spells of six miles at a gallop, five minutes to breathe, and on again. As in England, the maximum speed was obtained, and then came the iron horse.

To ride the post—that is, keep up with the "dilly," thereby getting the horses which were only brought up on the occasion of its arrival—was something to remember, especially if the post-master did not admire "style and gait" on arrival. He took a man's measure pretty accurately in general, and "ruled out" some.

Frayle Muerto was a small town situated on the River Tercero, in which the whole population appeared to be disporting itself on our arrival. The females hugged the waves on seeing the group of pale-faces on the bank. They saw plenty of them later. This town was destined to see the first colony of English gentlemen who essayed—alas! fruitlessly—to form a home in these regions.

On our return, which took eight days, the whole show broke down in a pecuniary and culinary sense. A jolt of the bullock cart mixed up the tea (*mate*—the standby of our body-guard),

the tobacco, and some gunpowder. The result was "past praying for." We stole some water-melons at one post, but they were not very filling, although as sweet as stolen fruit generally is.

At seventy miles from our starting point the post owner gave us a sheep and a bottle of English beer. The last fell to the lot of our bladder-hatted elder (the chief engineer had returned by dilly from Frayle Muerto), who, after drinking it, regaled us with an exhibition of "ground and lofty tumbling" which would have astonished his uncle, the "boss" of the contracting firm. We devoted ourselves to half-roasted mutton, and were ill for a further day or two in consequence.

At last we drifted into Rosario, having immensely enjoyed our trip; and with a few dollars to spend I was sent to board with a smart Yorkshireman, who had turned up from Brazil with his family on the chance of the sub-contract.

While waiting he bought bones, and row'd his eldest brat for reading too much weight on the steelyard. A ship was loaded and duly insured; fate decreed that it should be lost in mid-ocean; and our friend got a good start in business. At his table (which was an ample

one) I met the first wooden nutmeg. It had been used in a hasty pudding, and our landlord was jubilant when the dish appeared, it being a sort of extra and a surprise ; it turned out to be the latter indeed.

In the month of April the Paraguayan war broke out. I remember the "Esmeralda" passed down stream without stopping at our port, and people said, "What's up?" We heard later.

President Lopez, the Dictator of Paraguay, was induced to believe that he was destined to become the Napoleon of South America. An Irish lady was said to have been the cause of this. It was Troy over again, and cost the lives of half a million of men. It was "Ich und Gott" with a vengeance with Lopez. Even after his demise the Paraguayans used to mention him with bated breath, as "El Difunto" (the departed).

This monster—for so he proved to be—declared war against Brazil and invaded its territory. Then, in about April, 1865, his flotilla came suddenly down stream and boarded several Argentine gunboats which were anchored before the town of Corrientes, thus establishing a *casus belli.* Uruguay joined in

and a triple alliance was formed, which invaded Paraguay some months later. On the 25th of May a fight took place between a Paraguayan force, which had invaded Corrientes, and some Argentine regiments. I forget the result, but went on board the "Pampero," which passed down with wounded (some dead) and Paraguayan prisoners. We also threw oranges from the cliff to the latter, and unfortunately struck a dying man, causing him to come to and suffer grievously.

The war was long and bloody; the flower of the Argentine youth was immolated in fight and by disease in the swampy parts of Lower Paraguay. The Paraguayans fought as fanatics always do, believing that Lopez was a demi-god or inspired person, and the Argentines equally well under very adverse conditions of climate and surroundings. At Curupaiti, where some 8,000 of the allies were killed and wounded, the captain of the "Desidé" (gun-boat), who saw the battle from the river, spoke highly of their bravery when attempting to storm the place, which was too strong to be taken by assault.

Rosario became the headquarters for the drilling and despatching of the provincial

contingents, and I used to wonder at the forbearance of the men, who were struck with the flat of the sword by the drilling officers, apparently for trifling shortcomings.

After being in the office some months I was sent as engineer (rather a big title, but there is no other) to the earthwork camp, then at about thirty-five miles from Rosario, the man in charge being a fellow-passenger from the "Una."

I had to set out the work from the section and measure up at the end of the month. Men were very scarce; those engaged were mostly Basques, who played on bagpipes and danced the weirdest measures, and with a few natives, who did not, as a rule, take to spade work. Later on we were sent to re-measure and level the line to Frayle Muerto, owing to a slight alteration to make good government requirements. I worked at the theodolite (pegs having been put in at every mile or so by a previous surveyor), and we (all youngsters this time) carefully avoided the errors of the previous expedition, and averaged four-and-a half miles per day (with centre peg at every forty metres). A very creditable performance we found out afterwards. We had an excellent time, and discovered melons where previously

only water melons were to be obtained, and on like advantageous terms.

As I appeared to have an aptitude for going straight, I was then sent to the rail-laying camp, then in the Cañada de Gomez, and for nearly a year was perpetually putting in centre pegs on the eighty miles of straight line and arranging the grades of some of the earthworks which required it. All this work, under the supervision of North Americans, was done with the greatest accuracy, two level pegs and a centre one being put in at every forty metres.

Later on I was to see slipshod work, which became quite a curse to all concerned; finally, it was currently said that only a *capataz* (ganger) and two flag poles were required to set out a railway, and engineers' positions and emoluments fell off in consequence. It served them right, I think.

We were ahead of the other railways at that time as regards rolling stock—having excellent first (and second) saloon carriages to hold sixty passengers, made in New York. The Southern and Western, then also in swaddling clothes, stuck to the old English style for long after; the former until nearly the nineties. It was like sitting on the wagging tail of a dog to

travel over long straight lines on its trains. When a curve came the waggle-tail came out for a bit. Barlow rails were laid on the Southern and soon became like saws on the top. The drivers liked them as it gave the locomotive a "grip" at starting.

There was also a Northern railway a few miles long requiring often a few hours to "get through," and a line to the Boca about three miles long and subject to floods at times. Afterwards, in 1871, a viaduct was built along the foreshore; it was a fine structure and cost £40,000 for its length of a mile.

By this time I had mastered enough Spanish to carry on a mild flirtation, and to imbibe *mate* (sweet in all senses in those days) without scalding my mouth. The opportunities for the first were rare but no less appreciated in consequence.

I also took up dancing, even to the *gato*, but was a size too big to be graceful; in fact I don't think our race of males excels in the *pas de seul*, barring, of course, a sailor in his rig and hornpipe. But there were lots to learn as society had not reduced its smiles to those bestowed on waltzes only, with occasional lancers for "kitchen" imitations, to remind us

of our savage ancestors. In my day, if I had been caught swinging the cook round, the result would have involved smarting ears and a dish-cloth appendage.

At dances Arditi's waltz "Il Bacio" was to the fore, and the sight of the bobbing heads (the hop-step only being known) reminded me of Byron's description of the dance, as a "see-saw motion."

All the native women—a "dignity ball" cost little beyond a bottle of square-face (gin) for refreshments—danced the whole list down to the Schottische, the mazurka being of the pump-handle style. Anyway, people danced in those days to amuse themselves, whilst now they dance too often to "show their paces;" I don't mean to gallop, for that appears to have departed. In those days, the charge of the Heavy Brigade, after supper, "took the cake" —to become once more modern in our terms. The contractors gave a ball at that time, which I remember from the fact that gloves of my size were not obtainable among a small-handed race; painful consequences and loss of self-esteem resulted.

On the arrival of the rails at Frayle Muerto the line was opened to that place, and I was

left in charge of the station works and the construction of a bow-string road bridge built by the company for government account. I here made the acquaintance of the "bridge builder," a type of Englishman now, I think, extinct. Big, strong, bluff, and always ready for a "smile or a fight," they were fine fellows, half sailors in their language and ways. "You get her in the slings, takes a 'awf 'itch with the fall, claps on a snatch block, and up she comes," such was the style of their conversation, mingled with pantomime (with the left hand for choice) like that of the Provençal.

The war brought cholera in its train and the scourge was severely felt from Rosario northwards; in fact, I think it was bad only in that region. In Córdoba, where it was exceptionally severe, the deaths reached 300 in one day, in a population 10,000 only. The rest had fled the city. Two thousand victims were simply shot into a huge square well in the cemetery, and were visible years afterwards—a gruesome sight of bones and everyday clothes.

The line had been built as far as Villa Nueva (forty miles from Frayle Muerto) by this time, and I had to look after the station construction there. We lost twelve out of thirteen car-

penters besides a guard or two. And as Frayle Muerto had so far escaped a quarantine was put on which I had to evade, and did so successfully. Very soon the priest of the latter town organized a religious ceremony (with procession) as a thanksgiving, and thereby brought the cholera into the town from the outlying *ranchos* where it had been extraordinarily fatal! He was forewarned, but without result. Then we had it very bad indeed all round, but none of the Anglo-Saxons took sick. The victims were mostly North Americans of Western type, old employees of Meiggs and Co. of Chilian fame. They treated the whole thing as part of the day's work and mixed chlorodyne instead of bitters in their brandy cocktails (whisky was not in those days), taking the medicine every three hours or so, in the intervals of poker parties.

They had no call, except to nurse the sick if asked to do so, and were not either the men to fear any. They brought poker and pistols with them and understood them both. The way bullets flew about at times was a caution, but always in a friendly spirit. Only one man got hurt (a native) and he shot himself while handling a small size Smith and Wesson. Only a

tiny mark was visible on his breast, the ball lodging against the shoulder-blade. He took a dose of castor-oil (this was before the "experts" arrived) and nothing happened afterwards.

I think I learnt poker before any man in England played it, and, strange to say, forgot it about the time my countrymen learned it. I am to learn it again from my son, to help me in my declining years. It's like going blind, but I've got a "full hand" (of children) when the "call" comes.

Bold, and possibly bad, as were our ranks, we saved many lives with the aforesaid specifics together with hot mustard baths, in which the (im)patient was held by the iron grip of the bridge-builder. "You gets in and has it 'ot, inside and out; then we rubs you down, and under the blankets you bally goes," was the treatment. I think the fear of it quenched the other, which appeared to have a fatal effect on fanatical or nervous people. I am sure we saved the lives of our body-servants' wives by sheer bluff and a liberal administration of an Irishman's punch, plus the Indian's medicine already mentioned.

When about six miles from Villa Nueva with the rails (I was shunted from one thing to the

other as it suited the "boss") we saw the biggest scare from Indians which could be imagined. The whole respectable population swooped down on us and occupied our beds and board. I believe the Indians came quite up to the town, but did not trust themselves in the streets.

We had had a previous scare when surveying the line opposite Ballasteros, half-way between the two towns, but it turned out to be only our majordomo who had been on the spree, and on returning to the camp wanted to scare us into the bullock waggon so as to make a quiet entry. He succeeded in his object, but it leaked out afterwards.

I never heard of Indians afterwards until I saw the Tehuelches, and an odd Arauco (the warriors of the Indian tribes) in Patagonia. These only make peaceful raids on the rum bottles and mortgaged their "reserves" to enable them to carry on. They are a fine race but becoming extinct.

The finest black eyes I ever saw in a woman's head, and I've been in Italy, were of an Arauco squaw of portly proportions, on the River Senguer. They "sparkled," as Musters most truly said in his admirable book on Patagonia.

They would have been worth a Duke's ransom if possessed by a white woman. She spoke of her husband with disdain, as being a Tehuelche, and one of her daughters was an ugly girl. A tiny one who spoke no Spanish promised better. The Araucos are also called the "Manzaneros," as coming from the apple country.

On the Senguer wild strawberries grow like daisies among the grass; they are bigger than the Alpine variety.

Chapter II.

Villa Maria—"Sir Roger de T."—Locusts—English Colonies—"Comb my locks"—A protested bill—Steam ploughs—Billy Kemis—Carnival—The pink (and other) Dominoes—Army biz—Córdoba—The "gringo mason"—Exhibition in Córdoba—The observatory—Our "bully boys"—The Cruishkeen lawn—I nearly (dis)grace a museum—Moseby's yell—The banshee—Old Father Williams—Apology to Hudibras.

At Villa Nueva, or Villa Maria, as the station on the opposite bank of the Tercero was called, we received large troops of bullocks and bullock-carts.

The carts had immense wheels which were never greased, so that the troop could not steal past the local authorities. It was a law at one time and still obtained. The consequent screeching could be heard a mile off, also the shouts (at the bullocks) when stuck in a mud hole.

Whilst living at Villa Maria the "Claimant,"

at that time called Sir Roger Tichborne, came up with quite a troop of fine horses and remained some time with us. I ceded him my room, and lived with my American friend, who found his match at gambling in our new acquaintance, who was not above doing a horse trade, with the usual results. Whether to friend or to another it was immaterial.

"Sir Roger" handled the Queen's English in a most erratic manner; so much so that we were convinced that there was a "bar-sinister" in his title. In consequence we were not in the least surprised when the verdict went against him later on. He was a very big man and had an inordinate swallowing capacity, which he could indulge without any bad result.

Here we saw the first great locust plague, and very astounding it was. The trains were much delayed from the slippery state of the rails caused by the crushing of the insects under the locomotive wheels. The stench was dreadful round the place during several weeks, and bathing in the river was most disagreeable. Although in flood, and a quarter of a mile wide, its water was full of them in a half-drowned condition, and they availed themselves of a bather's head as a life-preserver. I will now

describe the English colonies which had been started as a corollary to the railway.

About the year 1866, a number of English gentlemen, some of them with a university education, came to the Republic. Taken "full and bye" they were the finest set of men I have ever seen, and very much impressed the natives in consequence. They appeared to have met previously or to have been brought together in some way, and this is precisely how a good colony can be formed.

They all turned up in a small space of time and purchased from one to four square leagues of land, a piece to the south of the town of Fray le Muerto and north of the Cañada de Gomez. They also had capital to make a start, but unluckily there was nothing to follow. Sheep would hardly do on the coarse grass. Cattle were subject to Indian raids (two Englishmen were killed in one). Agriculture failed miserably, and was hardly attempted except by Messrs. Purdey, Paul and King, who had very bad luck, even to the point of a camp fire which burnt up some six hundred acres of ripe wheat.

The rest made things "hum" in the town for a considerable time, even to "painting it red" on occasion, but most of them were

recalled by their families, a few died, and others scattered. They were a joyous lot, with a few exceptions of course, and rather taxed my slender resources when I was in the station at Frayle Muerto. Being brought up among "Western" men, who are nothing if not hospitable, I thought it necessary to have a bottle to pass on all occasions. White rum (*caña*) was the medicine, and it suited all complaints very well. I remember when the English chaplain came up to hold a meeting, or revival (I forget which), the committee for his reception "combed their hair for church" with the same unstable material. The parson was a bully boy, not strait-laced. On one occasion I won a horse in a raffle for about two shillings and paid drinks round at Charley's *fonda* (I don't think he ever had an "aunt") in joy and contentment. Later in the day an esteemed member of the colony borrowed the horse and my saddle; he lost both. I never had any luck with raffles afterwards.

The said "Charley" was a character. He hailed from Herzegovina, and I truly believe that he spoke every language in Europe besides his own *patois*. As he said "yah" for yes, he was dubbed a Dutchman by the Americans,

this being the one and only known nationality outside of the French and the Italian. A Pole (a Prince in his own right), who was our butcher, also was consigned to Holland, or described as from that country; there being no other pigeon-hole to put him into.

One day "Charley" bestrode a mule so small that both his feet touched the ground; but it "bucked," and left Charles for dead in the middle of the road. We brought him round, but the face he acquired was a sight to see. I fancy he did very well in business, being always cussed around, but paid.

Most of the lands passed into the hands of the tradesmen, a certain Don Pepe (I-talian) for choice.

The end came through a race between an English mare and a native horse. The former was drugged (they said by the station-master), and could hardly gallop—failed miserably. The "stand from under" was appalling, but one ingenious Britisher drew a bill on Aldgate Pump and Co., and succeeded in paying his losses with it. I fear that the bill was never accepted, but I heard the drawer was (and by a rich woman too) in Australia, whither he wended his way; fate plays funny freaks!

Under the circumstances nobody condemned his financial acumen. The "drugger was drugged."

About this time (1867) came a gentleman, Melrose by name, and with him steam ploughs, which were to solve the agricultural problem, some *savant* having discovered that wheat would grow. Old natives always declared that agriculture as a business was impossible owing to the periodical droughts and locust visitations. The latter's acquaintance I had made at Villa Maria. I improved it, and their condition, much later on. Their appetites are always healthy.

The steam ploughs were tried in the Frayle Muerto station ground, and I had the honour of taking first seat on the same. My steering was erratic, and I did not feel at home with half a dozen ploughs in the air in front of me. Later on I was to learn the wisdom of the old native's remarks, and not be at home either on one. Unhappily, the venture did not turn out a success and Mr. Melrose departed to North America.

Next came the Henley colonists. These were collected by a gentleman who proposed to grow flax, and each member paid him £100 as a fee

for entry (a sort of "ante up") besides supplying himself with a uniform and helmet, the regulation costume. The class of men were not up to the standard of the Frayle Muerto contingent, and the colony's life was miserably short, not getting as far as to put plough into the ground, which even was not purchased. It was a bad business, and had not the victim been a very decent lot something very serious might have happened; I heard that his being a family man saved him. This affair ended the colony craze among Englishmen—luckily for them, I think.

In the Cañada de Gomez, a Mr. Kemis started a horse-breeding establishment, which for many years was the finest in the Republic, and was the pioneer of all the others. He passed away, a much respected man and the pride of his countrymen for a decade at least. Times altered, and competition in fine animals became severe, but speculation in land was said to be the cause of the closing of the business.

Rosario was gay in those days, and money was plentiful owing to its being the shipping port for war stores, horses, mules, straw (as hay), etc. All these things were paid for by the Brazilians, and in English gold.

There was much dancing, and, I suppose, junketing (whatever that may mean). Only the young engineers were "hard up," but as they had youth and the tastes of a sailor, it did not much matter. The natives were exceedingly hospitable, and every dancing man was welcome. The girls were as nice as they always are until they learn to "put on side," and only dance with a man who holds a power of attorney; and things went on so merrily that I was questioned by the boss as to whether I had fallen in love with anybody. To this I truthfully (as I worked it out) replied in the negative—the fact being in the plural and general sense. But I was packed off to Córdoba forthwith. Nevertheless, I had one or two carnivals in those years and in Rosario which certainly were red-letter days.

After 2 p.m. on the three days, water in bucketfuls was thrown from every coin of vantage, but from flat-roof tops in particular. Copies of the English (London) *Times* newspaper (which were collected for the purpose, being of extra strong paper), were held up by the four corners filled with water. The ends were quickly and roughly twisted into one, and the "bomb" was dropped from the roof on a passer-by's head.

The effect was often astounding. I "mind me" of one beautiful cavalier of the time of Charles the Second, who sallied forth from the theatre to acts of "derring do." He had not gone four paces when he received a "bomb" from the theatre roof, a two-storey building. The effect was electrical. As a matter of fact, it was forbidden to wet a person in fancy costume; but there were exceptions in practice.

The public fancy balls in Rosario (that is, gentlemen one dollar, ladies gratis) were not up to much in those days. The costumes of the women were "dominoes," that is, a hideous mask, with a veil hanging over the mouth, and a sort of dress or cape all in one, of some tawdry material. Not to know the person inside was to court disaster, and not knowing prevented any feeling of appreciation for the possible Venus. If you knew, then you were sorry for her, and for yourself. The balls in private houses were much prettier, though the dominoes preponderated, but at least they did not smell musty from lying in "property" premises.

Returning to the army contract jokes which enriched people in Rosario, I remember that mules were sold (guaranteed tame) by the following approved method, which I re-

commend to my countrymen in the next "wah."

During the journey from the far interior, a certain man fed the mules with salt from his coat pockets, always walking about with them (in the corral) for that purpose and while doing so. On the day of the reception the same individual entered the enclosure, put his hand in his pocket, and walked round. The mules followed him like lambs, but were not salted that day; another mine got that, and this was paid for, together with a splendid breakfast, by the astute sellers. History never told of what happened afterwards either to the gentle mules or to their luckless riders.

"Aye di me Alhama" (a Moorish king said this when his town was taken). Years afterwards I met a man who told me that during the Abyssinian war we paid £32 for mules in Egypt, when others could have bought them for half that figure. The price appeared "salted" in this case. I suppose it is the case in all wars and with all governments.

I was "appointed" (the language of promotion improves as one gets older—before I had been "sent") as engineer of the incline earthworks, etc., running down to the city of

Córdoba. It was pleasant to see hills and stones after being in the Pampa region for four years, where not a pebble is ever to be found. Although in latitude 31° 25′ South, there was snow on the former occasionally, The climate is dry and healthy. Córdoba was the second city in the Republic, and boasted of a very fine cathedral and ten churches, all pretty big and mostly ancient. It was said to contain two thousand priests, nuns, novices, &c.

It was celebrated for this, for its lawyers, and for its cheap boots. These were of yellow (rough) leather, with bell-mouth tops, as seen in pictures of the cavaliers of Charles the First's time. A man looked quite romantic in them and a big slouch hat.

All the religious orders had their monasteries and nunneries, and I became quite an adept in recognizing the orders by their dress. I also learnt how to give the benediction (Papal, I think) with a movement of the fingers; this I used to bestow on friendly priests on meeting them in the street. It was always taken in good part.

Living was simplicity itself. Kids were eaten, and the skins formed the principal export. Other meat was rarely seen in the

market in quantities. Grapes were surprisingly fine, also figs.

Each family was said to bring up one member as a priest, and another as a lawyer to defend the family lawsuits arising out of ancient land titles. The Municipality at one time had a representative for every thousand of the population, and each was a "limb of the law." Thirty-two lawyers in conclave would argue the cross off a donkey.

There are parts of the Sierra (which is twelve miles from the city) where in the defiles fig trees had been planted by the Jesuits, thus giving a most grateful shade, but the indigenous vegetation was scrubby. Quarries of beautiful marble (one apparently as fine as the "Carrara") were opened at different points, but the expense of transport was a serious obstacle to the development of the business. The lime obtained by burning the aforesaid stone soon obtained a good market in Buenos Aires; better kilns were erected, and the export has always been on the increase. In connection with this business, and a local line then proposed, I lost the savings of several years, not a large sum—but it taught me the fate of the pioneer. Unfortunately,

one lesson is rarely sufficient for one of our race.

About 1869, the President of the Republic, Don Domingo Sarmiento (called the Schoolmaster), determined to hold an exhibition in what was called the "Lawyers' City," with the laudable object of inducing the people from the Littoral to visit the place and open it up—in ideas, at least. The railway was to be finished about a year later, so the opportunity was propitious. I left the railway, and through the influence of a friend at court (if such an expression be admissible in the case of a Republic) obtained the appointment of engineer to the undertaking.

The principal building was sent from the States, and the gardens, laid out by a most capable French horticulturist, were very beautiful. Besides the usual annexes, we had fountains and a rustic *café*, of which the framework, being of poplar posts, took root, and made a very pretty effect. To this annexe came a French barmaid, who on one occasion used the crockery as handy missiles, thereby acquiring the sobriquet of "La Petroleuse." This was during the reign of the Commune (1871). She sustained her reputation. Years

afterwards, in a far-off town in Paraguay, I met a Frenchman whose principal regret was his having lost the chance of "hunting a bishop" in that stirring epoch.

The result of the Exhibition was tolerably successful, and no doubt contributed to the object which our worthy President had in view. Agricultural machinery was exhibited, and trials were given near the city. On the arrival of the inaugural train, an immense crowd of people assembled to meet and inspect the outsiders (*parjuereros*), their frocks and gewgaws. In some cases appreciation was not extended to the wearers of these. An old lady called her "fry" around her by the remark, "Come away! Only foreigners are descending from the train." (*Puros gringos estan bajando del tren.*)

The President also established the Observatory of Córdoba on the heights to the north of the city—an institution which has done honour to the Republic, The Director, Mr. Benjamin Gould, was a North American *savant*; a most charming man, possessed of an equally charming family. A terrible accident—causing the loss of two daughters whilst bathing—was said to have broken the heart of their gentle mother.

Some years later they returned to the States. Both have passed away, deeply regretted.

Our lives were pleasant enough. There were some remarkably nice men in the place, notably the manager of the London and River Plate Bank, Mr. John Todd, and an ex-aide-de-camp of General Longstreet's—Rogers by name; also a relation of the latter, Charley Hawling, an ex-member of Moseby's, then called bushwhackers—now guerillas. Likewise the sometime doctor of the "Stonewall," commanded by Captain Page of Confederate renown; his name was Green. The last three were Virginians. The first two were thorough sportsmen, and on all possible occasions we made up shooting parties, partridges being plentiful on all sides of the city.

Mr. Todd contributed the comforts for the inner man and "smokes," Rogers the cocktails, which were *ne plus ultra*; and my engineer's express waggons carried the lot, including pointers—or "smell dogs," as they were called by the Americans. At other times Rogers would amuse us by fighting his battles (some forty with skirmishes) o'er again, demonstrated by plans drawn on the ground with a walking-stick. His memory was wonderful,

and in originality of language he equalled Mark Twain. Rarely a day passed without some new expression being added to the witty catalogue.

"Charley" was of a more bloodthirsty type, as became his position in the army. He and I paid a visit to Paris in 1872, and it was impossible to wean him from the portions of the city and Bois where the strife had been severe. All at once he would say, "See! a cannon ball struck that corner and glanced off, hitting that other house," etc., etc. He had a capital eye for cannons. Wherever a tree had been struck by a bullet, he would spot it immediately.

During the exhibition time I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Michael Mulhall, the co-founder, with his brother Edward, of the *Standard*, our much-esteemed (though often cussed) Irish newspaper. It always had, and has still, an originality before which any opposition pales. The brothers were exceptional, the first becoming the great statistician, and the second having the shrewdest appreciation of mankind and his readers. Their Editor's Table writer, Fred Power, had much of that same in his elbow. Nobody could digest a breakfast without reading his "Sparrows." Both brothers

have departed this life, leaving the paper in the hands of another Mike and another Ned, who are very much to the fore, especially on fair trade, which is the red rag to the (Irish) bull.

Mrs. Mike, who accompanied her husband to our Fair, was the true type of the girl from (or for) Galway, besides being a very beautiful woman. I remember the effect of the hat of the epoch—stiff slouch shape, one side of brim horizontal and the other vertical with a feather. Oh, it was *divino*, as they say in Spanish. Put an e for an o, and it's English.

Returning from an official trip to the Sierras (where paddling had been indulged in), two of the party returned in a tilbury, which was upset in the principal street, owing to the horse bolting. The natives declared afterwards that, though the Queen of Spain was supposed to have no legs, English ladies certainly wore neither shoes nor stockings. Both of these articles of apparel had been hung up to dry in the boot of the vehicle, and did not join the owner till somewhat later. Luckily the street in question was unpaved, and a roll in the sand did no harm.

There is a peculiar class of big partridge with a crest (not the *tinamu elegans*) in the

woods round Córdoba, and specimens were required by Dr. Bermeister, the *savant* and curator to the National Museum in Buenos Aires. Our sportsmen were honoured by the commission to obtain same, and distinguished themselves accordingly. On this occasion the outriders ran up on the side of the road, thereby turning the express waggon completely over; a friend considerately put his hand on my shoulder to assist his leap, thereby obliging me to stick to the ship. A gun was destroyed, thereby saving me from being added to the other specimens for exhibition.

Now and again Rogers would show us how the artillery drove when cutting off the retreat of the Yanks. We had mules in harness on these occasions—in fact, the first used on the railway. He assured us that it was necessary to go fast over a hole, thus there would be no time to capsize. His theory appeared correct, as we never did; but on one occasion the mules went off with all the harness; this was when we struck the sand at the foot of the hill we were descending rapidly, and with "Moseby's yells"!

Dr. Green had an excellent practice, although a heretic, among the priests, some of whom

were *gourmets*. A call to attend an apparent case of apoplexy generally turned out to be of a less serious nature. He "doctored" a friend of mine who had shot himself through the foot, and stopped in my diggings.

It is worthy of note that the only two cases quoted by me so far as happening were of self-shooting, and I believe that a revolver is more dangerous to its possessor than to other people.

At this time, mines—of gold, I believe—were discovered in Cruz del Eje, near Córdoba, and some amateurs turned up, amongst their number a Captain Diamond. This gentleman broke his arm and was laid up in a far-off hut in the mountains. The "boys" nursed him, or rather one did, and another rode twelve miles to do the moan of the "banshee" round about the sick man (who was feverish) by way of encouragement.

His attention was duly called to the warning by the faithful nurse. On the second night the lonely dip which had been stuck in a pumpkin was seen to rise slowly to the roof, being worked by the oracle outside, as an accompaniment to the wailing. Unable to "face the music," our friend came into town the next day. Who says our countrymen are wanting in humour!

There was dancing galore at times and the girls were charming, and, of course, divine dancers. The parents were most hospitable and kind. I remember seeing Captain Roca (afterwards General and twice President of the Republic) when he was courting the much-admired lady he afterwards married. She was the belle of the Córdoba society. Owing to its climate and beautiful hills with bubbling brooks, Córdoba was far pleasanter, in summer at least, than Buenos Aires.

The Exhibition was closed with a ball *al fresco*, and after acting as resident for a few months on the station works (as yet incomplete) I had to learn a lesson in law which may be useful to my readers.

Being commissioned by the National Government to make a survey for expropriation purposes of the grounds required for the terminal station, I was occupied for some time on the greatest muddle of old title-deeds it was possible to imagine, as they overlapped in all directions. On the completion of the work I left the fixing of the amount of my fees to the arbitration of a man named by the other side. He valued them at a fair figure, which I, of course, accepted; but his side

appealed before the Federal Judge. Conscious of the circumstances of the nomination, I contented myself with stating that their side valued the work; but the Judge reduced the award by one third.

Afterwards the secretary told me that a judge decides on the evidence produced by the parties; and, as I had produced none, the case had gone against me—*verbum sap.* I've argued both thick (same as) thin ever since, like old Father William, and never lost again except in home affairs. An argument with any "better half" is clearly an impossibility as regards net results. She who's convinced against her will, gives you her same or stronger opinion still.

It's not quite "Hudibras," but it's good sense to avoid it.

Chapter III.

I visit the Fatherland (1872)—*The Argentine "discovered"—Watch the Rise—Yellow fever—Our "Grand Old Man"—Right but snubbed—Another G.O.M.—Palermo Park—Our worthiest of Lord Mayors—Revolution of* 1880—*The Master—Put all your eggs in same bag—Who's smoking?—Why medals?—Falcon Knight—Prospective knight of the roads—The Volage*—The Pirates' blood—Paraguay—Eight to one* (*bar one*)—"*Fighting the tiger*"—*The "Angelus.*"

I TOOK the Royal Mail steamer "Douro," and returned to the fatherland in September, 1872.

The entrance from the sea to the Bay of Rio Janeiro inpressed itself vividly on my recollection as "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever"; but the stay at Rat Island, while coaling night and day with steam winches, was certainly the most diabolical time I had ever passed.

The Captain suffered severely from sea-

* The sobriquet of a gambling-house in Washington.

sickness, which rather upset my preconcerted idea on the subject. Said he never crossed from Dover to Calais without being sick. After three months at home, where I fear I was thought to be too much 'merican in everything, I returned (also in the "Douro") to Buenos Aires as Resident Engineer to the Ensenada Railway Co. and the Belgrano Gas Co.

I left England on January 9th, 1873, the date of the death of Napoleon the Third.

At that time the Argentine Republic was being "discovered" by the English investing public, and the queerest questions were put to me in consequence. People judged by the relative sizes of the maps in the Atlas; and England, South America, and perhaps British India, were considered to be of about the same dimensions.

One broker consulted me as to the desirability of investing in Santa Domingo bonds! A young lady asked me if I was in Chicago during the great fire, believing that town to be in the Southern States, and these to signify South America, or *vice versa.*

We were quarantined on arrival in the roads of Buenos Aires, and the Captain allowed us to

take a ship's boat and row a few miles (we were fourteen miles from the port) about the river estuary, which is about as broad as the Straits of Dover, but of fresh water.

On the last occasion, when less than a mile from the ship, and with a perfectly serene sky, a violent *pampero*, or south-west gale, broke upon us, and a heavy sea got up in consequence. With great difficulty, after an hour's row with four oars, we managed to get near enough to the ship to catch a line and be hauled alongside. These gales and similar expeditions (but under sail) have caused the loss of many lives, amongst them several ships' captains. Let yachting men take warning and keep an eye on the barometer, which runs up rapidly just before a gale with clear sky.

Being in the capital I was brought more in contact with the natives of the Littoral and with the authorities. I remained in the city or suburbs during twenty-one years.

At that time—1873—the Southern Railway had not gone beyond Chascomús and, I think, Las Flores. The journey to the provinces was made by the steamer to Rosario, thence by train to Córdoba, and the rest by diligence. The line to Rio Cuarto was under construction

and that from Córdoba to Tucuman was commenced; but it was of a metre gauge instead of five feet six inches, as were all the others. The break of gauge brought serious trouble to the Central Argentine Railway.

The city of Buenos Aires (then the capital of the province of that name) had gone through the yellow plague in the year 1870, and 20,000 people had died—more than ten per cent. of the population. In consequence it was determined to carry out a system of drainage and sewage works, and extend the water supply of the city.

The existing water-works had been constructed by Mr. John Coghlan, M.Inst.C.E., who had been educated in the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. He was a thorough gentleman, and the most diplomatic, in his treatment of the natives, of all the men I have known. He was the Company's "grand old man." To him was due the good feeling which assisted many subsequent English enterprises, and this in times when some of our countrymen did not behave with particular politeness to the natives; also the service of certain railways left much to be desired.

At that time the city did not contain more

than 200,000 people; and the National Government was a guest of, or on sufferance by, the provincial authorities. This caused a little friction, but things went surprisingly well until the year 1880.

A port in front of the town was proposed by Mr. Bateman, M.Inst.C.E., who was the engineer of the city improvement works already alluded to. The firm was then, or afterwards became, "Bateman and Parsons," the latter being brother to the inventor of the turbine system of driving vessels. After a long discussion a trial canal (for entry) was dredged in front of the city. A year later it was resurveyed to test its condition, or durability, and I was one of the Commission named by the authorities for the purpose.

As junior I had to do the sounding—and a wet job it was, as whale boats were used. The report was in favour of the stability of the canal where not on sand; but it did not meet with approval at headquarters. It was shelved, and nasty things were said of the Englishmen (three in number) on the Commission, who had given their services gratis and were quite unbiased.

During the years 1870 to 1880 nothing very

startling occurred, except a revolution in 1874, which was not of much importance.

President Mitre (our other grand old man) had been followed by Sarmiento, who was a far-seeing man, and decreed the Exhibition in Córdoba, and laid out the Palermo Park, for which he incurred the ridicule of nearly all the Press (the Frog Park it was called), and a large portion of the public. The result of his action has been to provide the city with a most useful and delightful resort at a very trifling cost.

The same things were said about Don Tocuarto de Alvear, our worthy Lord Mayor, who, in the face of great opposition, carried out the Avenida de Mayo, which has absolutely modernised the city and will be its pride.

Anyone, however, who attempts anything new—even verses—will be certainly looked upon as a "crank." *Aut insanit homo aut versus facit.* The public will only credit him with desiring to parade the *ego*, and to have himself photographed with, say, the Iguazú Falls as a background—to be much in evidence.

Dr. Avellaneda (a Tucumano) followed Sarmiento. He was a distinguished lawyer and capable. It was towards the end of his term of office that the Provincials swooped

down on the city of Buenos Aires, although the provocation came from the people of the city.

How long the spirit of rivalry had existed between the "Queen" provinces and the rest it is difficult to say; but the acute stage was reached in 1880.

Buenos Aires had always been the head and heart of the country, all gravitating to that centre. Its Custom House dues were the principal asset of the nation, and the National Government was, as already explained, a guest in the principal city. This could not go on for ever.

Some time previous to 1880 General Roca had subdued the Indians in all the regions south of Córdoba, including Patagonia, and had become the head of the Provincial party in consequence. In 1880 the said party wrested the city from the Province of Buenos Aires and made it the Federal capital, as is Washington of the United States. Strange to say the ruction was started by the Governor of the province (Doctor Tejedor) for political reasons which probably were associated with the forthcoming presidential election, there being no love lost between the inhabitants of the province of Buenos Aires and the rest of the

nation. But the former, or rather the inhabitants of the city, after causing Avellaneda to fly from the city to the military camp on the outskirts, did not pursue their advantage further but intrenched themselves within the city. They suffered the natural result of their inaction. The Provincials had time and opportunity to collect their forces, and, of course, finally triumphed all along the line.

The fighting was severe on one afternoon, but the army was too much for the civilians and such mercenary irregular troops as had been collected. On all sides the city men were driven in, and siege was laid to the city. The case was hopeless, and the act of the fleet (which was with the constituted authorities) caused a capitulation.

It appears that during an armistice the battery either fired at the ships or did something out of order under the circumstances. An ironclad then fired two or three shots, one of which riddled the Retiro Railway Station with shrapnel, and a similar shell burst over the city, sowing the balls in all directions, to the great alarm of the fair sex and others. The next day a committee waited on Dr. Tejedor, who gave in.

I was at the time resident engineer of the Northern Railway, as well as the rest, and lived at the gas works at Belgrano, which I managed in addition to being the engineer. We were thus at the headquarters of the National party, and quite clear of the city entrenchments.

Having victualled the establishment, we had only to await developments as described above. General Roca then succeeded Avellaneda as President, and the nation was established on a firmer basis than heretofore, as the city (together with Belgrano, Flores, and as far as the Riachuelo to the south) was declared Federal territory, the government of the province of Buenos Aires receiving notice to quit.

The provinces supplied a new contingent of government employees, and the "spoils of office" were more evenly divided between the component parts of the country. "It's an ill wind," etc.

To return to the minor events of the years 1872 to 1880, the following may be somewhat interesting; as a rule they must be taken as somewhere in the 'seventies. In any case, the dates are of no importance.

One event was the arrival of Edwin Clark, M.Inst.C.E., probably at that time the cleverest

engineer in England or anywhere. As a partner of the firm of Clark, Punchard & Co., he came on business connected with the Salta and Santa Rosa Railway in Uruguay, and the Campana one in the Argentine. His knowledge appeared to be universal, from that of the construction of the Britannia Bridge to correcting me for fishing in mid-stream when, as he said, the banks are the places to go: there's food there.

Always ready to be made the "inquire within" by junior members of the profession, he carried a piece of chalk or pencil, and his *quod erat demonstrandum* was facile to a degree. He was rather a terror at the "dinners" of non-professional people, though in putting things straight on any subject (prospects of the import of tea, or reason for rise in exchange) he always used the first person plural, thus: "It appears to me that *we* are wrong."

This became a well-known formula. It was like that of "Chucks the boatswain," and severe correction followed, the "rope's end" being left occasionally for others to hang themselves up with.

During the flood in the Lujan Valley (which destroyed the earthworks of the Campana Rail-

way, and cost his firm some £20,000) he was busy with a barometer noting the fluctuations of pressure. He pointed out to us that the "sea" which was "on" (although the wind was trifling) was caused by the said movements, which altered at very short intervals. A sort of see-saw proceeding, he said: he was deeply interested.

As a philosopher, I may mention his remark made whilst swinging in a hammock in Paraguay, a country which had a peculiar charm for him. Said he, "Hang up a bag, and whenever you are having a bad quarter of an hour, drop a black ball into it; and whenever things appear *couleur rose* in your affairs, drop in a white one; then at the end of life the number of the white balls will be equal to the black; *quod erat demonstrandum.*" At that moment a mosquito bit him, and a black ball was the result—he said this also. He explained in a pamphlet (written at his admirers' request) how it is that after three or more days of north wind, becoming more and more oppressive, a violent rain storm with gale from the south-west always follows, and then cold weather for several days.

He said, "The equatorial current, charged

with moisture, flows slowly south until it reaches the Andes, being deflected westwards by the motion of the earth on its axis (I mean the wind blows straight south, but the movement of the earth brings the Andes up to it). On the vapour touching the snows the moisture is immediately congealed into rain; this chills the next vertical section of the current, which follows suit. The storm, thus produced, rushes back from south-west to north-east exactly as a ball rolling and always coming against the wind."

I have met these storms (the *pampero*) at three hundred miles (or less) south of Rio Janeiro, and carried one with me to Villa Rica in Paraguay; that is from, say, 45 degrees south to 24 ditto—*nearly* 1,500 *miles.*

The wind immediately following the storm is as dry as (and resembles) the east wind of England; the sponge is squeezed quite dry. He had often sent forecasts of weather (in England) to *The Times*; of this he said:

"Suppose there are a number of men smoking in a room with a window open on the street. You are passing and see a wisp of smoke float out, how can you guess who emitted it? This is England. But," he added,

"in Buenos Aires you are in the room with the smokers, and forecasts become certainties."

We do not talk of *Mr.* Darwin, and I don't put a handle to Clark's name—it's not required. Such things appear to me to be applied in an inverse ratio to the capacity of the individuals. For further ideas on this subject, I recommend the perusal of Sancho Panza's remarks when Governor of Barataria. They relate to Dons.

I entirely agree with the North Americans in their strictures on "hanging tin plates" on a warrior's manly breast. Even the "Victoria Cross" has caused the loss of many valuable lives; more valuable, probably, to the nation than those they saved, or endeavoured to save.

Likewise came the "Falcon," with its owner and its crew of two friends and a boy.

To a longshoreman the cruise appeared foolhardy, and certainly Knight was a man who would not have turned a hair at the sight of any ghost or carnal reality. The yacht was about forty feet long, and had a slender, low rail round the deck as a bulwark; why people did not fall overboard at every roll I fail to understand. The crew (barring the boy) stopped with us at the gas works for a time, and were a jovial lot.

We went up to the Tigre in the yacht, a distance of, say, twenty miles. Caught in a storm we had to anchor, and passed the night on a bad lee shore offing. I don't think that the crew knew that the position (off San Isidro, with a "sou'-easter" on top of us) was dangerous, as the anchorage is bad, being tosca rock. I was too sea-sick to care about such details.

The surprise, when the vessel arrived at the Tigre and the marine authorities examined the ship's papers, was ludicrous. I believe the owner was mistaken for a madman, or crank at best. Are not his journeys admirably described in the books he has published from time to time, which are racy of the author, a worthy son of a maritime nation?

Also came Mr. (now Lord) Brassey's yacht, the "Sunbeam," and remained some time off Punta Lara, thirty miles south-east of the city. He was the exact type of the conventional Englishman, a "could-swear-to-'im-anywhere" looking man. Before leaving, he invited the "English Colony" to visit the ship, and entertained us at lunch.

Mr. Brassey took great trouble to do the "showman," and explained very concisely the

object of the anchor, capstan, etc. Edwin Clark was one of the guests, and appeared to be carefully taking it all in, especially concerning the manner of working the latter (the capstan), which as a power he had used for lifting parts of the Britannia Bridge. The ship was beautifully fitted up, and carried a large crew. *A propos* of this I am going to make a confession which, after so many years, could hardly furnish ground for a charge of conspiracy. When the yacht arrived, a Canadian friend wrote from Montevideo suggesting that, as business was slack, we might put out a filibustering expedition, and commence by "holding up" the "Sunbeam" when passing through the Magellan Straits; he added that about a million sterling could be obtained as a ransom. We, a friend and I, were instructed to inspect the premises and report on prospects.

The kindly invitation gave us the opportunity; but the view of a whole armoury of rifles, etc., and about fifty men to handle them (I am not sure as to the latter number) induced us to abandon the idea and to admire the "slaveys" instead. Pretty, fresh English faces were scarce in those days and reminded us of the puss in the corner of our boyhood. I like-

wise remember some old cognac of one hundred years in cask, which appeared to have lost its taste, and many very tasteful photographs of the family in fancy costumes, the Lord of the Isles being predominant. Pervaded with our piratical venom we wondered how the costume would look among the Tierra del Fuego groups.

Our host had the bulge on us when we first caught sight of the beautiful craft lying some miles off the shore. "You would think," said he, "that she is over-masted." We all declared that so it appeared to us. "Well," he rejoined, "it's not the case"; and he explained how the so many square yards of canvas, etc., were precisely according to the established rules. We took it all back!—a sort of "No, now you mention it, perhaps she isn't" way out. On leaving the ship several presents of books were distributed, but we formed no part of that reception. We subsequently warned our enterprising friend to "beware"; in fact, he always was of that cautious temperament.

Lastly, we were invited to a reception on board the "Volage," a British cruiser of the first class, Captain (now Admiral) Chadwick, if my memory serves. This invitation was to the

President Avellaneda, ministers, and other big-wigs and swell gowns ; but from the fact of my being the resident engineer of the railway (the cruiser was also at Punta Lara), I was included among the *gens sans importance.*

After arriving on board we steamed out to an offing, and the ship was put through her facings at target practice. It was impressive. The dead silence, the slowly veering ship, and then —Pum ! President Avellaneda, who was celebrated for his pretty boots, nearly jumped out of them.

Later on there was dancing, and the fancy coxswain danced the *solo Inglés*, otherwise the sailors' hornpipe, to the great delight and appreciation of the Argentines. He was a duck of a man, with as neat a pair of shoes (with 'ikkle bows) as our Chief Magistrate's speciality. I think the dancing was more appreciated than the gun practice. I noticed that by standing behind the cannon the ball (after a few seconds) became visible, and its downward course could be followed until it plunged into the water, or burst, if a shell.

Not having heard from my Montevidean friend, I did not report on the feasibility of " holding up " the " Volage." The crew (some

400 men), all brought up for the Navy, and many of them from the "waifs and strays" of London, looked decidedly formidable when clustered over the forward part of the ship.

We heard that tracts were distributed to them on their departure from England, and that taken "full and by" they were of the "good sort." The Salvation Army was not as yet; but the mountain was in labour, and the *ridiculus mus* was shortly to appear. The "drum" appears to have supplanted the tract of Dickens' time.

On leaving the ship I remember two boys of about fourteen years of age who were casting the lead. They appeared to me to have the faces of the non-anglicized "Angeli" mentioned by the ancient Pope. Flaxen-haired and blue-eyed, with the open countenance of their age and race, they were, no doubt, of the type of the great Vikings from which we have drawn our spirit of enterprise. Now and then, in an alien land, our hearts warm to the "auld lang syne," and in our veins, the blood, which is the same as of those I mention, is stirred. After our proposed piratical expedition this is quite too self-evident.

And now a few words about Paraguay, a

country I visited with two friends with the avowed object of tiger shooting. The jaguar is called *tigre* in Spanish. Jaguar means a big dog in the Guaraní language, the vernacular of Paraguay, this being (with one exception) the only case in history in which the conquered race forced its language on the conquerors. The reason may be the tropical climate, combined with the fact that the Guaraní language only possessed some three hundred words. Captain Thompson, who wrote the description of the Paraguayan war (in which he made a prominent figure) told me this. He had written a book on the subject, and spoke Guaraní to his wife, a Paraguayan lady.

The journey up to Asunción (about one thousand miles from Buenos Aires) was in the steamer "Rio Paraná," and was interesting as demonstrating the colossal size of even that section of the Argentine Republic.

Owing to low river (it being in winter) we only travelled by daylight from Rosario northwards; and day after day we steamed along, seeing only here and there a *rancho* on the eastern bank and interminable scrub or forest on the other. There were towns, however, every fifty miles or so on the former.

After passing Corrientes, where the Paraná is still about a mile wide, the Paraguay is entered, a narrower stream, with jungle on both banks. Asunción, the capital, is prettily situated on the eastern bank and on a red sandstone cliff.

In those days, some eight years after the end of the war and its ravages, the proportion of males to females was one to eight! The stronger vessel is egotistical enough in all conscience when one to one, but when in the above proportion the symptoms are aggravated. The saving clause for the female was to have a son; otherwise the unfortunate one ended her days as a coal-trimmer on the river steamers. This means, in plain English, that to be an unfortunate woman was to be a fortunate one—at any rate on occasion.

Paraguay is a park-like country, with grass and glades prettily intermingled, also with mountains generally in sight: the water is good and the soil somewhat sandy. Malaria was almost, if not quite, unheard of, and it was a country to "lotus-eat" in. As for work, *à quoi bon?* There is (or was) no market for anything, and the heat is intense in summer.

Various countrymen, with capital, have tried

it since then, and with the same result as that indicated above. A Blue Beard might do. The people were a gentle race (except in war) and of a happy disposition. The women decidedly handsome and hard-working—they had to be! The men were said to take a heavy toll for their services as housekeepers. Now nature has righted herself, as the expression goes, and the proportion between the sexes is normal.

An English colony (of East End Jews, etc.) was started in 1873 to 1874 by an English financial house in connection with a loan. It ended in dire disaster, as was natural; also in Parliamentary enquiries.

At about twelve miles south of the capital is situated a conical hill called Lambaré, after an Indian chieftain. There we rented a big *rancho*, slung our hammocks (the four-posters used in Paraguay), and obtained a hunter to guide us to our "prey" (the Western men say "meat") in the jungles of the Pilcomayo, a tributary on the west bank of the Paraguay. We soon had enough of it. The jungle was thick; and the noise we made in breaking through it was such as no tiger could have tolerated for a moment and remained within hearing distance.

The stream fairly swarmed with alligators;

harmless enough, 'twas said, but ugly to look at, especially if bathing was to be undertaken.

The heat, though it was now winter, was appalling, and we lived on oranges which we took with us. On our nightly return, our cook, a "limejuice nigger," compounded terrific curries, which set our blood on fire and gave dreams of the sport (?) we did not have by day. To be chased by ferocious tigers into alligator-teeming streams was too much even in the night season, and we "chucked it" after about five days' experience.

On paying off our hunter-guide we asked him how many tigers had on previous hunts fallen to his weapon—an old musket. His reply was conclusive. He had "never seen one"!

We returned next to Asunción and went to the circus; it did not steady our nerves, curry-wrecked as they were. The lady (fairy, I suppose she should be called) fell off at each round of the horse, and a drunken and hospitable man armed with a bottle occupied the next box to ours. When he entered the ring we were prepared for the usual comic undressing business; but when he and his bottle were summarily ejected, we found out we had been "sold again." Taking it all together, we

agreed that it was the funniest "horse opera" we had ever seen.

Not the least original thing was the government band lent for the occasion, which tooted "La fille de Madame Angot" to everything. It did so after mass next day.

After "de Wah" the emancipated nation (Lopez was killed when trying to escape) voted the Phrygian (liberty) cap as a becoming headpiece for the small balance of army which survived the slaughter. This was constructed of card-board and in the shape of a gigantic red snail shell!

The railway went as far as a town named Paraguarí, and from thence to Villa Rica had to be done on mules; horses do badly in the hot climate. The loading of a pack mule is (like scientific cussing) "a gift," and we did not possess it. The result was painful to see, as our "batteries" had to be so transported. Experience and three engineers' capacity were at last victorious; we got off, with the things *on*.

Villa Rica is situated on the extreme limit of civilization, with what is said to be primeval forest in sight on the neighbouring hills to the east of the town. The foot Indians from Brazil were said to wander in their glades, and

the locality to be dangerous owing to their use of poisoned arrows blown through a tube. An effort had been made to grow coffee near the town, but we never heard that it was successful.

Lopez, who had had some lucid intervals, once decreed that each owner of a hut (*rancho*, hence ranch in Western parlance) should plant so many orange trees around it. The result probably saved the remnant of the nation from starvation towards the end of the war.

Here you see the orange tree to perfection, a beautiful evergreen of large size and carrying fruit as golden balls among the foliage--also a dusky maiden (eternally smoking) slung in a hammock. When we asked to be allowed to purchase any fruit, we were told to take what we liked.

Most houses of a better class had a small patch of sugar-cane and a private still, of primitive construction but effective; the result would kill at long range, being taken neat.

After several days' partridge shooting (which was the net result of our "big game" expedition), and passing a good time in a friend's house, there being no hotel, we returned to Asunción and thence by the steamer "Guaraní" to Buenos Aires.

I omitted to mention that, owing to the teaching of the Jesuit Fathers, there were at that time many medieval customs which were interesting in this age of short politeness and unbelief. Thus at about sunset the church bells were rung (I suppose this was the Angelus), and every person within hearing either removed his hat, or knelt (if a woman) until the tolling ceased.

Again, at dawn the children used to come and kneel before their elders, and even visitors, to receive the old world blessing by a touch on the head from the palm of the other's hand. Fancy a "holy terror" Yankee boy in such surroundings! These customs were rural. I don't think they obtained in Asunción.

Chapter IV.

I judge epochs—"Why pay more" for (Irish) bull?—Ports—Vines—"Butter, cheese (and the care of bees)"—San Roque Dam—Others ditto-ed in 3rd decade—Another G.O.M.—La Plata—Ensenada Railway—A house divided against itself—Northern and Campana Railways—Caught napping—A "dumping" ground—Pacific Railway—The pioneers—Great Western—North-East Argentine—East Argentine—Trans-Andine Railways—Other railways, and extensions of existing ones—The C.A.R. gets a "plum."

When I look back over the vista of years it appears to me that each decade was a turning-point in the Argentine Republic's history.

Thus 1860 to 1870 saw the provinces of the Republic confederated; a president appointed in place of the previous dictator, or military chiefs; the dawn of railway enterprise; and the Paraguay war, which removed a most dangerous fanatic from the scene; also the yellow fever visitation.

The period from 1870 to 1880 brought the city

improvements; the subjugation of the Pampa Indians; the end of the position of the National Government as a guest in its own house, so to speak—that is, the curtailment (not to say extinction) of the Buenos Aires (*porteños*) influence among the governing classes. Also the discovery that wheat could be grown as a paying crop in Santa Fé; the soil in the province of Buenos Aires was said to be too rich—which, of course, was absurd. Finally, the natives, thanks to Billy Kemis, had learnt that blood would always tell in stock. It appears to me only yesterday that one of the principal cattle-farmers (one can hardly say breeders) of Santa Fé told me that any man who paid more than 100 dollars Bolivian (or £15) for a bull was an ass!

To continue (although we have not arrived at this year—1905—with our story), I consider that 1880 to 1890 was the most important decade; I married in it.

During that period the great trunk lines of railway were either constructed or much extended. The Ports of Buenos Aires and La Plata were undertaken and belong to that epoch. It was discovered that wheat would grow better in the province of Buenos Aires than in

the colonies of Santa Fé; that eatable butter manufacture was possible; and that French (wine-making) grapes could be cultivated with advantage in the Andine provinces. In Córdoba a reservoir was constructed to impound the flood water of the River Primero. The retaining wall (dam) was ninety feet high, and many square miles of land were turned into a lake. This may be said to be a work of immense importance to the future of the city and suburbs, the latter of which, without irrigation, were completely sterile. The heights round the city were worthless.

Finally, as the result of the boom, fine stock of all sorts was introduced in quantities and regardless of expense, thereby completely changing the grazing prospects, and laying a secure foundation for future greatness. I believe that this item alone may be considered a set-off against the collapse of credit and bankruptcy of the next decade. Men went to grass, but so did the said animals (in another sense), and multiplied exceedingly.

The decade from 1890 to 1900 was one of unparalleled misfortune, as will be mentioned in detail in its proper place, the only bright spot being the result of the last two paragraphs,

which was leading up to the exportation of meat and butter. It was also discovered that good cheese could be made in the country; previously the north wind was said to be its bane! It was found that lucerne would grow admirably without irrigation on the sandy wastes of the Pampa Central and San Luis. Land in those regions rose from 10 to 50,000 dollars a square league, and the result to the railways of the locality was beginning to give fruit.

What has this decade brought already? The settlement of the boundary question with Chile; the development of the meat and butter exporting business; a beginning in the export of fruit; and the nomination of a president who is of a higher type and greater general knowledge and experience than his predecessors. A man capable of taking a high position in the best society in any country. Let us hope that the *compadre* element may depart as did the *caudillos* of the 'sixties; surely their knell is sounding, if it has not sounded already.

Hardly had the National authorities re-established themselves in their own quarters when the question of sleeping accommodation for the Buenos Aires Provincial Government came on the *tapis*.

After much competition between the hamlets surrounding the city, it was decided to start afresh on the heights at Ensenada, and to build a sea port to give life to the new city.

The Ensenada Railway had been constructed owing to the foresight of Mr. Wheelwright, the initiator of the Central Argentine Railway; and Messrs. Brassey, Ogilvie, and Wheelwright were the contractors and, practically speaking, the owners. The original idea was to sell it to the Government, and no very great expense had been gone to in its construction or outfit. It had a rather weary existence during the 'seventies, and, beyond a survey of the future port and treat stood (in royal fashion) to members of the Government, no advance was made.

At that time the River Plate circle was divided into the Southern Railway party (later on to christen itself the River Plate House) and the Central Argentine Railway party, headed by Messrs. Brassey, Wythes, and Wheelwright. The first had for head a Scottish chieftain, of very much "I and the board" type. The latter party (the C.A. Railway) made the mistake of not comprehending the position Mr. Coghlan held (for reasons already given) in the country and before the authorities; and the

former was not slow to profit by this oversight. The C.A. Railway was old and rich, and the other young and enterprising.

During the 'seventies a railway from the city of Buenos Aires to Campana (a much better port than the Tigre), had been constructed by Clark, Punchard & Co. Up to that date, about 1878, all the passengers for the provinces took the train to or from the Tigre, and thence the steamer to Rosario.

The Northern Railway flourished exceedingly for a period, but was never equal to the situation ; and the new line cut it out, without doing much good for itself. Mr. Coghlan represented the Campana Railway which had a bad time for many years, and got into the hands of a Trust Company.

About the year '83 the secretary and almost factotum of the Southern Railway party came to Buenos Aires; and the result was the formation of a syndicate, which took over the Campana Railway (some fifty miles long), and obtained a concession to extend same to Rosario. How the Central Argentine Railway allowed this master stroke to take place under its very nose was a mystery, except, perhaps, that it had a guarantee which hampered its action, as well as

its own inertness. The younger and poorer party waxed rich over this operation, as I believe the one million pounds of ordinary shares of the camp and line were acquired for some £30,000 and brought out at par. Anyway the action was legal enough, as the prospectus said that "there were certain agreements which were to be taken (or considered) as private," etc., etc., thereby complying with the English (and amended) law on Joint Stock Companies. It appeared to work very well. I heard that one of the syndicate made £140,000 by signing his name, but it was probably an exaggeration. He was a rich man before.

The line was open a year or two later, and immediately took the passenger traffic from the river.

Shortly afterwards came an extension of the line to Sunchales; and the Central Argentine Railway could have had this, had it not been for some slim proceeding, to which a German shareholder took violent exception at the C.A. Railway meeting. Being a foreigner and rather abusive, he was "sort of ruled out." But the Central Argentine party woke up, when it was too late to prevent the other crossing its rails and occupying what was evidently the former's

district. From that time the board was re-organised ; but for many years their road was a dumping ground for inconvenient branches, etc., which gave fruit a decade later, but (in the 'nineties) of a Dead Sea order. It is pleasant to think that in the late amalgamation of the Central Argentine and Rosario Railways (the Campana extension became the Buenos Aires and Rosario Co.) the former came to its own again, and got, I believe, one share and a half for one of its not very scrupulous rival. *Sic semper*, etc.

About the year 1885 a most important line was proposed owing to the enterprise and energy of two Chilian gentlemen of Scotch descent. This was the Pacific Railway.

At that time the central part of the continent (at the latitude of Buenos Aires city) was almost unknown, and the survey was made under considerable difficulties. The Western (Government) Railway opposed the scheme in the dog-in-the-manger manner. At last, after great delay (and entirely owing to the tenacity of purpose of the brothers Clark) the house of Murrieta & Co. floated the company.

This railway extends from the capital to Villa Mercedes, in the province of San Luis,

where it connects with the Great Western Railway, which runs to Mendoza and San Juan; also with the Andino Railway, belonging to the National Government, and connecting Villa Mercedes and Villa Maria on the Central Argentine Railway. Its course is due west, and it is the high road to Chile.

Messrs. Clark also had the concession for the Trans-Andine Railway from Mendoza to Santa Rosa in Chile, thereby connecting with the other railroads of that Republic. The concessionaires built the section from Santa Rosa to Salto del Soldado (the Smuggler's Leap of Chile), but the tunnel section was only commenced this year. Also a railway from Monte Cascoros (terminus of the East Argentine Railway) to Corrientes, with a branch towards Santo Tomé, in the territory of Missiones. All these railways had National Government guarantees, without which their construction would have been impossible in such thinly populated provinces and territories.

The intermediate section (or link) between the Pacific and Trans-Andine Railway—that is, from Villa Mercedes in San Luis to Mendoza—had been constructed by the National Government. Clark Bros. had the right of purchase,

which was effected, and this section of the international highway is called the Great Western.

This firm (on whom Mr. Wheelwright's cloak descended) were the greatest pioneers of railway enterprise in the 'eighties; and it is difficult to over-estimate the services rendered thereby to the progress of the country.

During the 'seventies the East Argentine Railway had been constructed by Messrs. Pete, Betts & Co. After the Paraguayan War there was a serious misunderstanding between the Argentine and Brazilian governments.

I have an idea that the latter wished to annex the conquered territory, and the Argentine prevented this. Owing to the scare of a war between these allies, a railway was necessary to link the Littoral with the province of Corrientes, where it faces Brazil, the River Uruguay dividing the two.

Immediately after leaving Concordia, which is the terminus, one finds a rapid which stops the navigation of the river; and ten miles further on there is a bar of rock across the stream called the Salto Grande, which is impassable except (as is the other) in exceptional floods. A railway was required to go

round these obstacles. It (the E.A. Railway) is a Naboth's Vineyard; and the tenth commandment is violated by the N.E. Argentine Railway to the north and the Entre Riano ditto to the south, who want to rent, control, or otherwise assimilate it. The answer invariably should be, "A plague on both your houses."

The Entre Rios Railways cover part of the province like a spider. They were built for government account and taken over by the (loan) bond holders as a baddish debt. They have been that ever since, the capital expenditure being too high.

During the eighties Messrs. John G. Meiggs & Co. (and the partners Hume Bros.) did a great deal of railway building in different provinces. In Santa Fé, the line in and about the colonies and to Córdoba; also that from Córdoba to Rosario. All these were of metre gauge. Likewise the line from Bahia Blanca to the north-west and part of the Entre Riano Railway, the first of 5ft. 6in. gauge, the latter of 4ft. 8½in. Then they purchased the government line from Córdoba to Tucuman and amalgamated it with another of those mentioned.

The colony lines in Santa Fé were built for

government account; and later on a French company rented them for a long term of years.

The National Government built a line from Tucuman to Jujuy, the most northerly province of the republic, with a branch to Salta.

A French company built a line from Tucuman to San Cristobal to connect with the Hume (colony) lines in Santa Fé; this was, I think, for government account, or with guarantee.

The Buenos Aires to Rosario Co. extended their system to Tucuman (from Sunchales), with a short branch to Santiago del Estero.

The Central Argentine Railway bought the Northern Railway of Buenos Aires, and made a connection between it and their main line at Rosario; part of this was done in the 'nineties. Thus that city had two railways connecting it with the capital of the republic.

The Southern extended its system to Bahia Blanca, Mar del Plata, and Tandil, and the Western (government line) from the Chivilcoy to Trenque Lauquen, once the headquarters of the Pampa Indians; also from a station on their main line to La Plata, the new capital of the province of Buenos Aires. This crossed

the Southern Railway at Temperley, where the two railways had a junction.

The National Government built a short line from Villa Mercedes (province of San Luis) to La Toma, a station close to (or in) the Punilla valley.

The company formed by Clark Bros. constructed the Trans-Andine Railway from Mendoza to the entrance of the Uspallata Pass. From the end of this line Valparaiso could be reached in about three days; but of these two days' march had to be done on mule-back.

Also I omitted to mention that a railway has been built from Tucuman to La Madrid (a station on the Córdoba-Tucuman line), passing through the sugar-growing zone of the latter province. This was in the 'seventies. And another from Córdoba to Cruz del Eje (a station on a part of the government line sold to Hume Bros.) passing through the Córdoba sierras and opening up that region as a summer resort. This line had a guarantee from the province of Córdoba, which is greatly in arrears; altogether, I believe.

The Pacific Railway missed an excellent opportunity to acquire an exceedingly rich section of the country (with old-established

towns) to the north-west of the capital. The Central Argentine Railway occupied part of it in the 'nineties by constructing a line from Pergamino to San Urbano, once called Melincue, and Indian port. A connection with their system from the former town to the Canada de Gomez gave a very direct line from the capital to the City of Cordoba.

The Buenos Aires and Rosario Railway built branches from their main line to Santa Fé and Morteros.

Chapter V.

The 'Seventies—"Larks" (singers and others)—"The three pesetas"—Our "specialities"—The city improvement works—The "bally foreigner"—"Facilus decensus" to the Retiro—The 'Eighties—Marriage lines—The goody-goody mails—La Plata city—Ports at ditto and B.A.—Hard lines—The Flood—Juarez Celman, President—Grasses, and "banks having wild thyme"—I lose my chance—The Southern Cross—Railway 'ology—"Heads I win, tails you lose" contracts—The Argentine "houris"—The "Sons of Belial."

BUENOS AIRES in the 'seventies was a lively place, and "the boys" had a good time.

The Alcazar, a French theatre in the Calle Victoria, was the nightly rendezvous for the *élite* of Argentine (male) society. I mind me of one of Germanic origin who headed many a "scrap," and years after became Chief of Police in the Capital. It was Fouché over again. Anyway, he was a very fine man for anything or anybody, the fair sex included.

The theatre company was the most versatile I ever knew. A different opéra comique, or screaming farce, was given every night, with seven days to the week. Colombé, the tenor (!) and low comedian, became celebrated in Europe. Dubrit danced (as Venus) in the concluding act of "Orphée aux Enfers," and surpassed any mere goddess in agility. She did not resemble a certain historical Queen of Spain in anatomy. No angel troubled the water in the shape of interfering gendarme, as at Mabille. As the departing audience issued from the door the air was gay with Offenbach's ditties, and the beggars reaped a rich harvest from the "contented minds," to them (as to the possessors) a continued feast.

A box (for four) was a *sine qua non* to the *jeunesse dorée* (or *papiée*) of that epoch, and one worked over-time, not for fame, but for that consummation. At a theatre from which the Alcazar had been evolved once acted a Madame Dotte (no doubt named after a marriage settlement) who eventually was escorted to the Russian frontier by a Grand Duke, or gendarme, I forget which. Anyway, she "took the cake" there as here. Also we discovered Gayari, the greatest tenor of his time. He

came to our Opera House (Colon) during two seasons before Covent Garden heard him, or, I presume, of him.

The Argentines greatly appreciate music, and there was a large Italian population which worships it at all times and places. In London the opera stalls would hardly be filled with the shopkeeper element, but in Buenos Aires this was the case, the cost of a chair being about the same as in London.

The prima-donnas were also very good, but not equal to the tenors (we also had Tamagno during several seasons), until Patti and Schalchi Lola came late in the 'eighties. The orchestra, under Bossi, was simply superb; some fifty musicians.

Another opera house was built late in the 'seventies, so we had two big theatres giving operas at the same time, and both paid well. Colon was about as big as Covent Garden, the other being about two-thirds of the size.

I was in London in 1878 and had no difficulty in getting a stall for Patti's benefit, but in Buenos Aires had to beg a place in the gasman's box (being of that "ilk") to be present at Gayari's. The said box was behind the curtain, and it was interesting to see the ballet

girls holding on to the side scenes and stretching their legs with a preliminary kick before the curtain rose. The ballet girls were not lovely when out of gauze; they smelt of garlic, likewise smoked pipes.

We greatly enjoyed the Carnival balls in those times. Those of the Opera House (not Colon) were the *crême de la crême*. The male sex paid, I think, 8s. each, but ladies were free. This custom is universal here, but I don't think it obtains at the Covent Garden fancy balls. Supper came afterwards, and soup *à l'oignon* was very much to the fore; the ladies then removed their masks. This ceremony became often a *casus belli*.

Little else but German beer was taken during the dances, so they were quite orderly. Old boys (bucks, I suppose I should say) occupied the boxes, and smiled on the younger generation below. These laughed at the elders above. Comfort and joy reigned supreme. I shall not look upon its like again from below.

I fear "our set" did not trouble society much, but we sometimes "gave the girls a treat."

The "set" contained many nationalities. I have sat down to supper at a worthy German's

house with seven different ones. The *andaluz* was, however, always the man for Galway on such occasions. So long as he has three francs, "one for the theatre, one for the cigarettes, and a third for the best girl," he is supremely happy. And why shouldn't he or anybody else be so?

On the marriage of one of our "ex-boys" we presented him with an album containing "our pictures." We heard that the bride, on running her eye over it, asked, "Pray, who are these men?" Some certainly required it. None had the courage to call later on. In fact, to be mathematical, we were unknown quantities in the *beau monde* of the Anglo-Saxons, but these did not know what they had lost by being so conservative.

Another branch belonged to Rosario, and were "Museum hunters." They collected door-knockers (brass for choice), tin beds, and "hanging signs" generally, and became a "holy terror." Very tip-top bank officials were its promoters, with a tramway magnate thrown in. Probably the specie "recovered" formed part of the bank's reserve fund, being weighed in before any race, or run. This came much later, but the shock was gallantly withstood. Brass tacks,

etc., were not nearly reached. This bank never "jockeyed" anybody.

During this epoch the city improvement works, under Messrs. Bateman and Parson, went on apace; and being on good terms with one of the sub-contractors (the principal firm being Newman and Medici), I often walked the tunnels and attended lunches.

On one occasion my host, whose bill for candles had reached colossal proportions, turned the corner quickly (during the dinner hour) and found a gang breakfasting on the same. These sons of Southern Italy had reason to doubt the worth of that little game. Afterwards the dips were dyed blue, and poison (instead of a simple washing ingredient) was suggested as the cause. The ruse was successful.

The sub-contractor of the intake tunnel below the river was a character. He was a burly man, and dressed as became his underground occupation. Always polite (to the bosses), he was of the "got-any-little-job-in-the-way-of-a-contract-to-let" sort. Rumour said he possessed rows of houses at Margate. This leaked out (as did the tunnel) later on.

Talking of contractors, I once met an American one (alas! his ledger is long since

balanced and closed) who was working in Chile at bridge-building in a big way. Said the government engineer (a rather pompous man): "Mr. B., I hear your bridges have settled."

"Have they?" said B. "But I settled first!"

I sometimes entered the German Club in those days and found out how excessive beer-drinking is counteracted by playing skittles. An elegant game, but savouring of "vanity." The game (called ninepins) was once forbidden by law in the States (or in one of them); the players playfully put up ten pins on the next occasion, and gained their case. What's in a name, etc. The same State forbade the sale of liquor; whereupon the shops sold a roof shingle for ten cents, and *gave* a drink in—a present was not illegal.

When a new Governor was to be installed at La Plata, a "familiar" came to ask me to take the official shandrydan on a wagon attached to a passenger train. This was against the railway law, as it would have caused the disconnection of the vacuum brake. I pointed this out to him. "Why," replied he, "what's the good of being governor if he is not above the law!"

When the first government Commission "sat

on" the plans of the Southern Railway, the general plan was on a small scale, and the different lines showed angles, the curves being too short to appear. One member was greatly troubled by this, but all at once exclaimed: "Ah ya sé, una mesa!" (Why, of course, there will be turntables!).

The plans were duly approved.

During the 'seventies I had a great deal to do with what, in England, are called "foreigners" of all nations. A German, located in England, once said that our nation placed aliens under three denominations: the "illustrious foreigner," the "intelligent foreigner," and the "bally foreigner."

To a man who is cosmopolitan in ideas and has lived among all nations, there is no occasion to enter them under any separate heads. An Englishman, when amiable and polite, goes down everywhere, and finds that all the world's akin. Probably if we, when abroad, were judged by the world at large, we should fit into one of these three pigeon-holes: the frigid or pompous Englishman, the eccentric Englishman, and the—rude Englishman. Of course there are many exceptions, and they are increasing daily as we travel more.

During the 'seventies and 'eighties the Central Station was close to the business centre of the city. This had been accomplished at great expense and trouble, but it was recognised as being the most convenient situation, and was the making of the northern and south-east suburbs. Retiro, the old (and much abused) terminus of the Northern Railway in the 'sixties, and which was almost deserted when the railway extended to the Central Station, has now again become the terminus of the railways which use the latter in partnership. For some time past these railways have been talking about building a permanent terminal station at Retiro, which, if we are to judge by past experience and public opinion in the present, will be a gross blunder. When I was a boy, the suburban traffic of the great railways entering London on the north and east sides hardly existed, and was looked upon as of no importance, and not worth catering for. Later on there was a scramble to connect with the urban lines, with the result that the despised traffic became of the greatest importance to the said lines. Here we are going on a precisely opposite principle, and the result will be deplored later on.

In the last chapter I gave a summary of the railways built during the 'eighties, and will now return to my narrative.

During the last months of 1881 I returned to England on business, and had almost decided to give up railroading and get employment as manager of a land company, when fate, or my guardian angel, decreed that I should fall (why fall?) in love and get "spliced," all within forty days. This completely altered my plans; as to take a young wife to the wilds of the Gran Chaco was clearly impossible. I therefore turned the firearms I had acquired into hard cash and passed under the yoke, both of matrimony and railway management.

There was one railway here which was a upas tree to its managers; all died before middle age. I was to enter its shade, and, I may add, narrowly escaped a similar fate. But I was forewarned, having been its resident engineer for several years. It was the Northern.

The Northern and Ensenada Railways were under one administration (in America), so I got the goose and the gander, and the sauce was "peppery"—at any rate, at first. I got them because nobody else would have them. There

was nothing radically wrong with the Northern except that it had a salted capital and had always been starved. The previous manager was a very capable railway man, but persisted in fighting a saw-mill, in the shape of the public, having, of course, very indifferent weapons. He paid the penalty of his pluck and of his perhaps mistaken policy. It was a fatal heritage to him.

I was quite unaware that his health had completely broken down, when I was informed that I could have the post on a year's agreement, afterwards renewed. This suited me, as it meant a honeymoon (and a bit) in the big city.

I retained my billet in the gas-works, although requested by the railways to resign it. As a matter of fact, I thought that the one year would be enough (and to spare) of the others. I was wrong again, or, rather, fate decreed differently ; it always does apparently. If ever there was a true proverb, it is the French one which declares : " Nothing is certain but the unexpected."

However difficult may be the counsel, " Take no thought of the morrow," I certainly think that anyone who tries in America to make plans even for two years ahead is wasting his

time, and the doctrine of fatalism is apt to commend itself to an observing man.

Alter any important action or move in a man's life, and a series of consequences is modified, involving perhaps births and deaths, and all that should ensue from these in endless ramification through ages to come.

When a man marries his sorrows may begin, but he becomes a link in the chain of eternity and his life is no more his own. "For better for worse," as "for richer or poorer," he must tread the way. An iron grip is on him, which only death can loosen.

As Schopenhauer said, "our lives are tragedies (or we think them so), but to all others we are but forlorn (or low) comedians."

I don't think I knew, or thought, much about the above homily when, after passing a week in Paris, I finished my conventional honeymoon on board the French mail steamer "Equateur" bound for Buenos Aires, where I arrived in April, 1882.

It was the third journey I had made in the Mensageria Maritime line besides one on a "Mediterranean" steamer to Marseilles. This last was on visiting the 1878 Exhibition in Paris and "inspecting" the Mount Cenis

tunnel, which I "passed." I likewise saw Geneva, Milan, and Turin, and rejoiced exceedingly. After the groups of statuary in the cemetery of the first, those which I had seen in England became a nightmare; the horse in Leicester Square, Queen Anne, and Charles I. included.

In 1878 I discovered that the French mail steamers had their saloons on deck and that the cheapest cabins were the best; I profited by the discovery. Nothing could be nicer than the treatment I received from our neighbours, the French, and on all occasions I was the only Englishman on board and quite unknown to everybody. Just before entering the Mediterranean the Captain sent for me, and I went on the bridge, asking myself, What's up now? "Monsieur," said he, "yonder cliffs stand over the Bay of Trafalgar where you gave us such a severe defeat in the time of Nelson. I thought you would like to see it."

It was the custom to run down these steamers on the score of doubtful morality: this was as much a libel as to say that ours were paragons. Both were like any big hotels, neither better nor worse; and there was nothing to choose between them as far as any casual observer

could notice. Having made three voyages in this line, I think I may express an opinion.

Buenos Aires in 1882 was not very different from the city I had known in 1864, except that the paving was somewhat better, and "Cinderella" dances had been inaugurated, there being a few young English ladies in the place. Much to their credit, "kitchen lancers" were not invented, nor did the "cake walk," as yet, astonish our American cousins, or delight the beachcombers on the river frontage, or tempt respectable men to that region.

In 1884 the city of La Plata was founded by the Governor of the province, Dr. Dardo Rocha, and the Ensenada Railway was suddenly called upon to carry a very heavy traffic with very insufficient means at its disposal. The Northern Railway was now running very well, but the other appeared likely to collapse under the strain. The prompt action of the Board in England saved the situation, and the express service to La Plata was inaugurated.

As an accessory to the city, a port for sea-going craft was to be constructed at Ensenada at about three miles from the site of the new capital of the Province. The engineer of this work was Mr. Waldorp, a Hollander of great

repute in the profession. At last the Ensenada Port was to be constructed ; and the railway, it was thought, would reap the reward of its many years' waiting.

Unfortunately for the realization of this fond dream, it was decided to build a port at Buenos Aires, occupying the whole frontage on the River Plate. Don Francisco Madero obtained a concession of this, and a loan was raised in London for the purpose. The engineers were Messrs. Hawkshaw, Son, and Haytor; and the contractors, Messrs. Walker and Co., who built the Manchester Ship Canal. The size and convenience of this port left the other in the shade, although the entrance of the latter was more convenient than that of the former. Both had canals for entry, the former ten miles and the latter three miles in length, the first being in the open river and the other protected by break-waters of piling and loose rubble.

Both works were admirably carried out. The La Plata Port, being only one big basin, was finished before the other and received the largest mail steamers for many years, but eventually nearly everything gravitated to the Capital of the Republic. The La Plata Port

was located at about three miles from the then railway terminus, and a concession to extend to its boundary canal was obtained from the Provincial authorities. This considerably improved the position of the railway but did not get at the traffic at that point, for the Provincial Government line, which had a junction with the Ensenada Railway at Pereira, ran along the river's cliff to La Plata city and thence to the port. As the same provincial line also was connected with the Southern Railway *via* Temperley, there were two routes between the two cities; one to Central Station (which was the favourite one), and the other to the terminal station of the Southern Railway at Plaza Constitución.

The carrying out of this three mile extension was a terrible job for me. We passed through a long series of fiscal lands, which by the terms of the concession had to be given gratis; but I was made aware that title-deeds might turn up, and in this case we should have had to pay fabulous prices for our right of way.

By a subterfuge, and the oversight of a friend, the original document of Concession had been, well—stolen; there was no other word for it; and I was "between the devil and

the deep sea." I knew, also, that the "scapegoat" treatment was in consultation.

However, I laid the rails right along the route (simply on the grass), and posted some men with a tent to see that they were not torn up at a point where a title had appeared—discovered buried in a cremation jar on an island, I heard. The Government, who were cognisant of the disappearance of the Concession, sent to ask what I was doing, to which I answered, "Building an extension to the port." The Board wrote to ask the same thing (a telegram was sent to me, which I have kept as a curiosity; but let that pass) and got the same response.

Finally when, little by little, it was seen that I was in earnest, the Concession turned up, but had to be badly shorn in the operation. The Board approved of the carrying out of what was as good as finished, and no more titles were unearthed—at any rate, in our direction. But this, and the traffic on the Northern, which had grown beyond our expectations, and for which our rolling stock was absolutely insufficient, "played me out"; and on going on board the mail boat in September, 1886, I was completely floored. The upas shade had

worked, and two days before I arrived in England, during a terrible gale of wind, I was "given up" by the ship's doctor. Fate decided again ; whether in my favour or against me is a matter of opinion.

To give an idea of the state of things on the Northern, I may say that in the summer, which was the busy season, we had all our engines *except one* under steam, and an engine ordered for cargo purposes took just one year to appear on the scene. The old-fashioned engines, of some twenty-five tons weight, could hardly pull the passenger trains, and I received instructions to *reduce the train mileage.* The result of an attempt to do such a thing would have been heavier trains still, besides being impossible on a suburban road just becoming very popular.

When in England I arranged with the Northern Company to cancel my contract. They had no intention then of sending any more rolling stock (though they did send ample six months later), and were desirous of ending our relations, from which suggestion I was in no way averse. That was eighteen years ago, and from that time to this I have hardly known a day's illness. The upas shadow had blown off, and I had become the exception to the death

rule, although I had "looked over the fence." I returned as manager for the Ensenada Railway on the same salary as I had received previously from the two railways, with a two years' contract.

Among other curiosities of the epoch may be mentioned the "paper pound," an invention, I believe, of the London secretary, who didn't receive them; I did.

My contract was for a salary in pounds sterling, "at the legal fixed rate of 5·04 dollars to the pound." Note the word "legal." At that time such was the law of the land.

But in 1884 or 1885 the law was repealed, and the rate fluctuated to any figure; eventually, in 1893, to twenty dollars to the pound. As there was no more "legal" rate, I contended that I ought to be paid in sterling, but was forced to receive 5·04 dollars when the pound sterling was up to, say, six dollars or higher.

No other gold contract men were so treated. Argentine lawyers said that I was right "without the shadow of a doubt"; and on my mentioning this I was offered the arbitration of the Company's lawyer in England! I was idiot enough not to have paid myself, as was intended by my contract, being also the legal

representative of the company ; but I was not idiotic enough to accept that offer, and I could not proceed legally against myself.

The Ensenada Company behaved very liberally towards me in another way, and the Northern *judged* as to how much I must have lost (an *ex parte* proceeding which was ridiculous) and paid me half of what I think I was entitled to. I mention all this as a warning to others. Put not your faith in companies' equity and don't make a contract if you can help it. If they want to get rid of you, they'll find a loophole ; the contract is based on a vacuum of that sort. But if you want to get out, not for Joseph nor his brethren ! if you're useful—and cheap. In a word, you need have no anxiety when working without a contract. If they want you, you will be retained ; and if not, out you will go, contract or no contract ; it makes no difference in practice. If you go to law and beat them, they will call you a "troublesome man" ; if they beat you, "a fool" or worse. Such is the unwritten law of these Medes and Persians. They know that here it will take just two years for you to win your case. They also employ lawyers on a yearly salary. The Board's duty to the shareholders acquits them

in any case. Anyway, that's my experience, and such is my advice.

In 1885-6 a big flood tumbled down nearly all the bridges of the Ensenada Railway.

They had rather shallow foundations, and dug their own graves, likewise fell into them, but happily during the night season. This stopped the traffic for a month, and lost us £20,000 in receipts. The Board behaved very kindly, and no blame was attached to anybody.

Things began to boom in 1887. Roca was followed by Juarez Celman as President, and things went merrily on. A wee bit too much so for stability. Paper money ran up till, in September, 1889, a pound sterling was worth 10 dollars, but as I had resigned and left in April of that year (on the completion of my two years' contract), and was with others, and on a gold basis, it did not matter to me.

The city of La Plata was now at its best, and had a population of some 50,000 people, but depended on the patronage of the Government and its employees. Things got wilder and wilder. La Plata was to have a cathedral equal to or bigger than Saint Peter's in Rome, and Córdoba a theatre larger than the Scala in Milan.

In June, 1890, the bubble burst; a revolution took place, and Juarez Celman was forced to resign. Don Carlos Pellegrini took his place as acting President until 1892.

During the last of the 'eighties, great numbers of pure-bred animals had been introduced, which, as already mentioned, completely revolutionised the grazing interest, and prepared the way for the prosperity of a decade later—that is, from 1900 onwards.

The old Spaniards called the cow *la pata de oro* (golden hoof); and so it was, and is, and always will be, on the exceptionally good grass and in the climate of a very large portion of the Republic. Where the native grasses are poor lucerne may, in many parts, replace them with excellent results. The bad (original pampa) grasses do not seed, and, if once eradicated, leave the ground clean and clear for the new pasture. About thirty-five years of continual grazing are required to refine the outside camps. In this case all the original grasses disappear, and are replaced by what is called *gramilla*, a fine grass, admirable for sheep. But by ploughing the land and sowing lucerne it is possible in two years to produce a better fodder than the thirty-five years will vouchsafe.

Of course, farmers were not slow to grasp the situation and its merits.

From 1882 to 1889 I was brought into intimate communication with the National and Provincial authorities. I always received the greatest consideration and kindness from all the officials; but it was exhausting work.

Exasperated by the conduct of some of the managers, the Provincial authorities passed a draconic decree (among others) whereby the arrival of a train more than ten minutes after the advertised time was punishable by a fine not exceeding 2,000 dollars or, say, £400. I never paid one; but the expedients and arguments used to escape the toils would fill a book: and the rising of the sun on April 1st, 1889 (the date of my exit from this hornets' nest) was a bright one to me.

During the 'nineties were created the Provincial banks, which were in imitation or on the lines of those of the United States; but there was a considerable difference in the business morality of the two nations. Soon it was whispered that clandestine issues of notes were going on in these establishments, and at any rate the country became flooded with paper money to an alarming extent. This reached the climax

at the end of 1889, when gold went to two hundred, or a paper dollar note dropped to a value of fifty cents gold.

The Mortgage banks, of which there were two, the National and Buenos Aires Provincial, had far too many *cedulas* (mortgage bonds) in circulation. The former weathered the storm, but the latter was hopelessly involved, having lent enormous sums on properties which produced little or nothing, and in some cases were almost worthless.

The Provincial Bank of the Province of Buenos Aires was one of the strongest in credit in the world until the year 1883. It is not too much to say that the prosperity of the province had been built up by that establishment, which lent money at interest 2 or 3 per cent. less than foreign banks, and on easier terms of amortization. It also was ruined in less than seven years.

On one occasion a very high official asked me how much land I had purchased in La Plata; this was when there was a scramble for town lots. I replied I had no funds for such a purpose. "What!" said he, "no money? Come to me to-morrow, and I will give you a card to the bank." It was a tall offer, but I

funked it; old-fashioned ideas of one's own solvency and the "paper pound" speciality caused me to lose my chance in life. It was kindly meant, however.

A little later on, the Government decreed a present of town lots to those who had been instrumental in pushing forward the construction of the city. I was included in this considerate proceeding; but as the acceptance would have put me in an awkward position, I was forced to decline with thanks. No, the railway manager's position was not a happy or easy one to hold in those days. We had no native-born company's representatives to smooth matters down. All had to be done off one's own bat, and the Boards sat on the fence round the "play," shot-gun in hand, to "pot" you if you made a bad stroke. It was the devil and the deep sea personified. Lucky was he who escaped the official wrath and the "notice" in the board minutes; not to mention the chance of being honoured by the erection of a big cross to symbolize the one he had carried in life. However, better a living ass than a dead lion; or, as our American cousins put it, "I'd sooner be a live son of a sea cook, than a dead hero."

In railways, as already mentioned, great strides had been made, and the construction of the Pacific Railway had opened a way quite across the continent, which was to have a surprising effect on the agricultural prospects of the next decade. The Southern extension to Bahia Blanca, which was forced upon the Board by the governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, and, I may add, became a stock-piece in the "mutual admiration" performances of the former at a later date, was second only in importance to the Pacific line.

Having created Bahia Blanca, they find themselves in the embarrassment of Frankenstein; for they do not know how to exorcise the great cereal traffic which has grown up lately—in spite of them—in the southern region. If my readers disbelieve this statement, let them "look around" or ask in the district or in the native press, and one English paper (February, 1905).

The extension of the Rosario Railway from Sunchales to Túcuman was neither so necessary nor so successful. The zone traversed was arid, besides having a semi-tropical climate. If the line had skirted the Rio Dulce near Santiago del Estero it would have opened up a

large area susceptible of irrigation, for which purpose the said stream is admirably adapted. Unfortunately, in the scramble for honours during the boom this was overlooked, and the line had very handsome terminal stations at Túcuman and Santiago del Estero, but very little traffic.

This extension eventually proved the *deus ex machina* for the Central Argentine Railway, as it levelled its haughty competitor, if not to the dust, at least to becoming No. 2 of the "Heavenly Twins," who now desire to emulate the Siamese speciality. If they succeed it will take more than two generations to cut the Gordian knot and purchase the watered stock of the fusion.

The Central Argentine Railway bought up the Northern Railway at a very big price, and the upas tree helped to cast a big shadow on the former, whose shade reached its climax early in the 'nineties, when it was used as a syndicate's dumping ground.

The Rosario Railway, which was not successful in acquiring the Northern Railway—in fact, declined to pay the price—built a line to the Tigre from the Belgrano Station. No doubt suburban towns would have started all along

this line, but the crash of the 'nineties delayed this development for quite ten years.

The Ensenada Railway had a splendid opportunity of extending to the south and becoming a really big company. It had caused the purchase of the Magdalena line (a Provincial government concern) by forming another company to work under the control of the grandmaternal one. This company acquired (by something like a legal subtlety) the extensions to Tandil and Belcarce, which cut right through the southern district, and moreover carried with them the right to extend anywhere within the southern districts. Having acquired these, they used them simply to force the Southern into a district (or territorial) arrangement, which was also bogus, or ended by being so, as was the company controlled.

As the price of this, "the garments were divided" among the three (or two of them), and the concessionaries, who had trusted in an agreement between the parties by which two of them undertook to construct the lines (though they never did), were ultimately "left." It is very queer history, and ended badly for the principal actor (the Ensenada), which, after receiving a part of a syndicate's dumping, went

from bad to worse; its shares, which were 210 when I resigned, fell in the 'nineties to 42.

Finally the Southern, one of whose directors had said years before that the Ensenada Railway would become a siding of the other, purchased it with shares, giving a £100 one for £200 of the others. The Ensenada was well out of it at the price. After it played the little game of "bluff," which degenerated as indicated above, it never had a chance of standing the racket round it, as will be explained later on.

The manager who followed me was in no way to blame for the fall of the value of the Company's shares. He kicked vigorously against the "dump" and other items, but was over-ruled, and being "inconvenient," was superseded. *Sic transit*, etc.

He declined to receive "paper-pounds" as full discharge. This was towards the end of the 'nineties.

This year, 1889, was a very wet one in the central parts of the Republic, and a great trunk line to the west was under water for many miles —and months.

To repair this a contract was made, but without specifying quantities nor duration. Later on the contractor was ejected, and a law-

suit—eventually entailing two arbitrations (and a bit—the biter bit)—resulted. The proceeding lasted about thirteen years, and the final award was in the Company's favour, through lawyers meddling with what was not their "last."

Sub-contractors are very often given contracts which have no equity in them; at other times they work with nothing written, being told that they must leave it to an "Englishman's honour." Occasionally the model doesn't work, and it's the Italian who gets left.

It appears to me that English companies should alter their ways in this respect, as Argentine judges will read between the lines, as it is right they should. What would an English jury say?

During the year 1889 I was occupied with a firm of contractors in the provinces, and lived again in Córdoba, after an absence of seventeen years. The city was in the height of the boom; every small boy took a tram, and had ten cents for a fare. The San Roque dam had been completed, but little had been done so far with the irrigation ditches leading therefrom. Everybody was busy buying land, mortgaging it to the bank, and buying more; it

was a carnival of credit and "shin plasters." Likewise typhoid fever was much in evidence owing to the sandy soil, cesspools, and low river; this last caused by the aforesaid dam.

I also saw the tropical region of Tucuman for the first time.

This province was celebrated for the beauty of its women; but on making comparisons (not odious this time) I did not think them prettier than a home one. Possibly the faculty of appreciation wanes after forty; still, I recommend young "bloods" to visit Tucuman. There are plenty of "swans" there, and they (the bloods) can do the "goose step." Never, however, sleep outside or without a mosquito net, as malaria will certainly result. If you wish to play the guitar and serenade "Margarita," by all means do so, but put your head in a bag—of netting.

Malaria is what the "Yanks" call the "chills and fever." It's that exactly. It "knocks it all out of a man." When you see a poncho'd son of the soil listlessly leaning against the church porch and watching a fly during its *siesta*, he's a victim, and is only waiting for the "shake" to come on, which it does punctually at the hour appointed by the microbe.

Can a locomotive become lost or mislaid? The answer is "Yes," and the true story is as follows:

When the Córdoba-Tucuman line was being handed over to the English company, which purchased it from the authorities, an inventory was taken, and—lo and behold!—a locomotive was missing. As the gauge is different on the lines south of it, there was no case of barratry involved.

Months passed, and one day a drunken *gaucho* came to a road-side station to see the train pass, and inspect the station "bar." Said he, "Aha! I know where there's one of those," pointing to an engine. Inquiry and search ended in the discovery of the missing locomotive at the dead end of a wood siding, of which the rails, once connected with the main line, had been removed.

It was said that just previous to the inventory (or afterwards, I forget which) even stationary (or traction) engines jumped walls in their endeavours to escape the British service. Some furniture got clean away, but afterwards remained in the wrong man's hands. In fact, first come with the cart was first served.

However, I read on one occasion that in

Australia it was discovered that certain political bosses had been in the habit of sending their wool over the government railways without paying *any* freight. I never heard of that here.

When the Anglo-Saxon starts in on the war (or any other) path, he always gets "first slide"; it's "root hog or die!"

Time passes more rapidly than the brain calculates or feels. On one occasion, in 1889, I was walking the streets of Córdoba with a friend, and happened to pass a very striking young lady, who, native fashion, was standing at the door in the cool of the evening. Said I, "Why, that's Miss G." "No," said my friend, "that's the daughter of the Miss G. (now Mrs. H.) whom you knew twenty years ago." The twenty years were but as yesterday. The resemblance was most striking.

Sometime previous we (Darby and Joan) had been invited to visit Concordia, and by doing so were enabled to form our own opinion as to the merits of the so-called "Sons of Belial."

It was favourable; and I believe that a bishop who had visited the locality expressed himself, later on, as satisfied—we certainly were —with the hospitality of the "Ilk." A picnic at the Salto Grande, an excursion to the

Cuareim (Brazilian territory on the Upper Uruguay), and a week's fishing, partly in the eel pond on the station garden, were sufficient to rub off the "northern cobwebs." Our host, a man once great on the trapeze, was suffering from an attack of asthma; and his exertions, notwithstanding, to make things lively were so commendable, that we returned in the sincere hope that he would forsake the *comparsa* and bless some fair woman's life by similar devotion to duty as a host in himself. Heigh ho! the "might-have-been."

I also remember a rugged salt, a veritable Captain Cuttle, and of the Jem Mace type, who bestrode his gallant steed as only a centaur or sailor can. He was a leading member of the *comparsa*, probably took the helm, or received the ladies on official occasions; a post for which his courtesy eminently qualified him.

The vineyards were just starting in Concordia, and proved to be a great success, giving quite a new life to the locality, The wine took a prize at, I believe, the Chicago Exhibition; a good first, I heard.

Chapter VI.

The 'nineties—The 1900 Revolution—The Plagues of Egypt—The Black philosophy—The doleful "dumps"—My correspondent experience—Can't "bear" it—Statecraft—Federal system—"Tramway Rural"——Ports—A bank's strong room and company—Frowning cliffs, but no precipices—Chile—"Dives and Lazarus"—No good morning for the latter—Locusts covet the "Naboth" vineyard—Electric trams — Ancient lights — Conservatism — "Free classics" — Standard Landmarks — Chile's opportunity.

THE 'eighties finished with doubts and fears, but I do not think that anybody thought that a revolution would break out six months later. The Government (or official party) publicly boasted that there was no opposition. It was called the *Unicato*, and quite seriously. But I suppose it meant that, as nearly everybody had a finger in some pie, or official bank, nobody was dissatisfied.

During the year 1900 I made two round trips

to England on business, and happened on the second occasion of leaving Buenos Aires to embark three days before the Revolution broke out.

After leaving Montevideo we made the acquaintance of some Argentine naval officers who were fellow passengers, and was told that something was going to happen. On arriving at Rio we saw the telegrams relating thereto. The secret had been well kept, and when the outbreak took place, the military storehouse and the arsenal fell into the hands of the revolutionists. It was said, however, that what was found there did not tally with the books and vouchers. In other words, the peculation which had been going on saved the situation for the Government party, as the arms and ammunition seized were not sufficient for the revolutionary party to arm their men. Then Roca intervened; Juarez Celman was made to resign, and Pellegrini took charge of the presidential chair.

Then came a rattling amongst the (hardly dry) bones, and the enormity of the clandestine issue of notes by the Provincial official banks was revealed. It was a "pretty kettle of fish": some one hundred and fifty millions of dollars in excess of the record as legally justified.

It was currently said by far-sighted men that if Pellegrini had taken the bull by the horns and declared a forced currency, as England did during the Napoleonic wars, and as other great nations have done during great calamities, the result would have been different, and gold would have remained about the type of 150 (it fell to that when the Revolution ended) instead of eventually running up to over 400. This last meant that a dollar paper was only worth twenty-five cents gold, which is equivalent to saying that a pound sterling became five shillings. To those that had mortgages in gold or had to pay interest or other obligations in that medium, ruin was a foregone conclusion. In fact the whole country was bankrupt; all native joint stock companies, with one or two exceptions, were liquidated at an enormous loss to everybody concerned; and all the banks, except the principal English one, had to obtain Moratorios—that is, a suspension of execution for a period—or to close their doors.

All this happened between the years 1890 and 1894.

To add to these troubles the locusts came in 1891 with their countless millions, and returned year after year until 1898. Seven years on

and seven years off (till 1905); such is the true saying of the oldest inhabitant.

This plague, which devastated the country north of the city of Buenos Aires, and reached even to the south of it in one year, completely upset commerce in the provinces of Santa Fé, Córdoba and Entre Rios, to which the low price of wheat in Europe contributed in all the wheat region. The price went down from about thirty shillings a quarter (480 lb.) to nineteen shillings, the lowest in the English records. At this price, *The Field* said, it did not pay to grow it even on free and untaxed land. In Essex land fell to prairie prices (from some £35 to £10 per acre).

The wheat, as a rule, escaped anything beyond a mauling by the locusts, but everything else was devoured. This meant that the only asset had no price in the market.

As I had acquired about 3,000 acres in the agricultural region in Santa Fé (northern section), and had taken a working partner in 1889, I soon obtained an experience which was to be ample for one lifetime. Year after year, for some ten years, we cultivated about 800 acres in wheat, and never made "seed corn."

There (far to the north of the great wheat

zone) the locusts did more harm than further south, and we had droughts and hail storms besides sirocco to fill the bill. 'Twas paid by losing everything. I never even got an account of the liquidation of the business from my partner, and I suppose never shall.

I therefore know something about agriculture and "friendly" societies. We also had 600 acres of lucerne which was frightfully mauled by the locusts, and when not, wet seasons ruined the hay. Like many business tragedies it became at last quite comical. I agreed with Schopenhauer that we are all forlorn (or low) comedians.

When a man can laugh on his misfortunes being alluded to, I suppose he becomes a philosopher, and finally (if clever) inhabits a tub and saves a rent charge.

But what happened to me also came to all the (Argentine) world and his wife, although the latter did not return to the primitive apparel, tailor-made gowns having come into fashion. Only two of the old Englishmen I knew "got out" in time, and both have departed this mortal life—I may almost say from having done so.

Prosperity kills far more than adversity; here

again Schopenhauer comes in with his "black philosophy," that the negatives are really the positives of life. One lives much longer on a sleepless night than in a dreamless one. But, on the other hand, the ninety days which intervene between the signing of a bill and its payment, or renewal, are of record brevity. Probably it is the exception which proves the rule.

But some went down under the misfortunes. Drink was generally the cause of this, but more were saved by the dearness of champagne than killed by "wild cat" whiskey or square-face. This latter had "liquidated" the Pampa Indians, and took a few white scalps. Those who kept a stiff upper lip are alive and thin (some "slim") to-day.

The railway shares suffered an astounding fall in the London market. The Central Argentine Railway shares fell to 40 per cent. of their written value, from about one hundred premium. The Southern fell to par.

The latter company learned a useful lesson (on this one occasion only), and never again paid a dividend calculated to bring an opposition line down upon them on the principle that there was room for two. By putting extra

gains to reserve and other funds (pension) etc., some savouring of vanity, also strangling traffic, this was managed, although the latter may be likened to one of the labours of Hercules. To change—not cars but—workshops, is also a good way of reducing over-prosperity.

Early in the 'nineties, the Provincial Government of Buenos Aires found itself in difficulties with the house of Baring, and sold the Western Railway (the brightest jewel in its helmet—crowns being unknown) to a syndicate of Southern Railway origin and proclivities.

This system of railways had become rather sprawling, and some of its branches did not pay. They were consequently (as hinted at before) dumped on to the Central Argentine and Ensenada Railways, and brought both very low down, for a long time—quite seven years. It was rather rough, as the syndicate were said to have pocketed one million sterling on the transaction. The extensions to the north of the main line were run on to the Central Argentine at some £11,000 a mile (without rolling stock), which was quite double what they cost. The Ensenada bill was, I believe, worse still, as that one (the Ferrari branch) was of less cost of construction than the others.

If the Ensenada Railway had been wise and wakeful (to look for no other adjectives) it would have bought the section of the Provincial railway which went from Pereira to La Plata, thus gaining an independent entrance, in fact, the only one, to the city. A lively opposition, and a refusal by the Central Argentine Railway party to be made a dumping ground for the other party's undesirables would have broken up the syndicate, or given rise to two: one for the main line from the city of Buenos Aires westward, and the other to divide the branches among them.

There was a queer story of fees (in shares) being paid to a go-between in the negotiations, which may, or may not, be true. Until syndicates fall out, shareholders will hardly get their own men in.

Not the least surprised of the railway men here was the manager of the Ensenada Railway, who kicked vigorously against the "white elephant" bestowed on his charge. A shareholder of the Central Argentine Railway spoke up at a general meeting, and was asked to join the board in consequence. I fear he was too late to do much good.

At first (as perhaps they do now) the Central

Argentine Railway and Ensenada paid, I think, 4 per cent. annual interest on the capital fixed for the lines they thus rented, which was worse than buying them outright. Of course it doesn't matter much now, as the Central is in smooth water and got the "pull" in the amalgamation with the Rosario Railway. As to the Ensenada it's in the narrow "sell" for ever laid. A history is not concerned with the might-have-been, but simply chronicles what *has* been. If I am wrong in any minor details, I am willing to correct them, or to stand corrected.

About that time (1892) I was asked to write some letters for *The Financial Times* or *News* —I forget which. I did so, calling a spade a spade, as was natural. Only one reached the "Printer's devil," and this was reproduced in the South American journal. The other miscarried. I had no idea till then how careless the post-office could be. I gave it up, and did not get the value of the stamps; possibly someone stole them.

I remember an attempt at prophecy by the then secretary of a big line of the Southern group. It was when the Central Argentine Railway made an issue of shares for some ex-

tension and gave them at par, although the rest of its stock was at a big premium, to its shareholders. Said he: "The old cow has calved but she won't calve again." It was good, and stood for quite ten years as true, but finally died from going "bully"; but it was past the Baring (syndicate) epoch. "Everything comes," etc.

By the way, one reason, I heard from England, for not publishing one of my letters about the Argentine Railway was because it would have "beared the Baring syndicate." I thought till then that financial papers were independent concerns; I've thought differently since. I said in it that I did not think that the Central shares would pass 70 per cent. for years, and so it came to pass. But it is a mistake to be a "bear"—except in private life, where a hug is sometimes within the limit of practical politics and not bad form.

He that does not believe that things will "boom," or write so for others, is not a desirable correspondent; and when things turn out as he has forecast (when a "bear" profits), he will be cursed for being a prophet of evil—in fact, till quite lately, he would have been considered to possess the evil eye. This stigma

still holds to the extent of people not asking his opinion except as to the prospective life of a deceased wife's mother.

Towards the year 1894 came more political troubles—Provincial this time.

Since 1892 we had had for President Dr. Saenz Pena, a judge (the *decano*) of the Supreme Court and a most worthy man, but not quite of the stamp required to manage a South American Republic. It is hardly untrue to say that the "bold bad man" is possessed of a character more in accordance with his surroundings. If one could find a bold, good, and crafty one, he would be the *deus ex machina.* Such an one is difficult to find, but I believe we are not far from that desideratum now. By crafty I mean "state craft." Pellegrini got very near, within two-thirds of my definition. He could have been a very great man indeed.

Moreover, Dr. Pena was a compromise between parties and supposed to satisfy both or all, with the usual result. When about half way through his time he resigned, owing, I believe, to the two local revolutions, one in the Province of Buenos Aires and the other in Santa Fé, which overturned the then existing authorities.

The heads of the Revolution were men

greatly respected, both clever lawyers, and both patriots. They have passed away from among us. One was of the stamp of Dr. Alsina, one of the most determined of the Buenos Airean politicians, who foresaw the inroad of the Provincial horde and was the terror of the Indians. But when the National Government took the present capital and became the Central one, the Provincial governments became puppets in the hands of the President and his party. The so-called Federal system became Unitarian, in the sense that all the wires were pulled from the head office.

From that day to this no election has been blameless; or, to put it plainer, all are "put-up jobs." No Argentine understands, or practises (which amounts to the same thing) the universal or any other suffrage; all is arranged beforehand. Whether this is an advantage or not, is, to me, an open question. All companies have one manager only, and even a board of directors is under the management of one of their number, or, sometimes, the secretary is the guiding star. It always comes back to one head centre; and this being so, why have Provincial governments at all? A delegate from the National Government, a secretary,

book-keeper, cashier, and chief of police are all the staff required.

The Argentine nation is made up of fragments (monads) to a great extent; there are no labour associations worth mentioning; none, I believe, outside of the foreign element. Such individuals would only be the prey, or followers, of quack politicians or revolutionary spirits. The idea of an election in which men would vote on any sound lines of policy, from understanding their scope, is simply amusing to me. The educated natives, as I shall say elsewhere, are "as clever as they make 'em," but all the lower classes—the immense majority—do not know "B from a bull's foot," outside of cow-boy business.

I remember during the many years I lived with citizens of the United States, hearing that then (in the 'sixties) the Federal system did not work very well in the great Republic. The Provincial governments were expensive and corrupt; carpet-baggers were numerous, and scalliwags were pitchforked in everywhere.

When a province gets to have many millions of inhabitants I suppose the *Imperium in Imperio* has some *raison d'être*. Here we have some fourteen governments with the parapher-

nalia of Chambers for a population of four millions, and one million more in the Federal capital to influence the rest.

I do not know how the new Federal system of Australia is based; the word is enough for me; but I remember that one very great English politician said at the time that the result had yet to be seen.

Besides, to compare the Anglo-Saxon and Spanish races in an administrative or political way is clearly absurd. I should think that the only real and true election witnessed in a Republic must be the Presidential election of the United States, but perhaps distance lends enchantment to the view. "The farthest hills are always the greenest."

During the early 'nineties steam power was applied to a line of tramway called the "rural" one. This at the present is the only undertaking of its class which has adopted that means of traction; or it may be said that it is the only railway which has been constructed by a native's capital and worked by the owner, who is in this case Mr. Lacroze. It is of the English standard gauge (4 ft. $8\frac{1}{4}$ in.), and therefore the same as all the city tramways. The rolling stock is North American, and of excellent design and

quality. The rails, of a weight of only 30 lb. to the yard, are of Krupp steel, and after quite ten years' service showed no signs of wear.

I mention this to show what can be done by a light rail on level ground, as that traversed by the rural tramway. I do not believe that the line and equipment cost over two thousand pounds a mile of way against an average of ten thousand pounds declared capital of the English 5 ft. 6 in. gauge railroads.

Some day the natives will wake up to the enormity of the capital of these institutions, and the necessity of constructing economical railways, as has been done in Egypt and other countries. For two thousand pounds per mile such lines can be built and equipped, and the present freight charges can then be reduced one-half.

The La Plata Port was constructed to create a traffic and existence for the Provincial capital apart from the National one. So far it has failed, and accomplished nothing worthy of note. If it were made the head of the system of narrow gauge lines (2 ft. 6 in. gauge), as in Egypt, the result would be surprising. It would not only be resuscitated, but would break down the monopoly of the Southern Railway. That this must come to pass sooner or later is a dead

certainty. Such a monopoly as that of the Southern breaks down the patience of the inhabitants of its district, and thus digs its own grave.

There is another point where a port could be built with great advantage. This is at San Clemente, on the Atlantic. Here a depth of 30ft. at low water can be obtained by dredging a short canal. This would completely revolutionise the district of Tuyu, which is very rich, but has been deliberately left in the cold by the Southern policy for fear of their traffic being tapped by an ocean port.

Towards the end of the 'nineties the whole of the city of Buenos Aires Port works were finished—at any rate, sufficiently to admit cattle and grain to be shipped with modern facilities. If the ancient conditions of lighterage, or Port in the Boca, had been maintained, both the cattle traffic and the frozen meat business, as well as agriculture, would have been impossible.

Certainly the carrying out of this work was providential ; everything appears to have fitted in admirably to make the province of Buenos Aires prosper exceedingly—everything except its Government, which did nothing for its

progress. Its roads were in an uncared-for and shocking condition; its bridges were broken down; and if the public had been permitted to appoint "vigilance committees," instead of the rural police, the result would have been far more satisfactory to the cattle industry.

Many years previously I had been assured that at Melincué (now San Urbano), then a frontier port, many of the so-called Indian raids were made either by the Government troops disguised, or under their auspices. Next to robbing a State bank with signatures came the business of cattle stealing. When the National Minister of Finance was asked, early in the 'nineties, whether he intended to prosecute parties who had misconducted themselves financially, he was said to have replied: "If I had to do that it would be necessary to include everybody in the indictment."

When one of the great native banks was started in the 'seventies, a very clever statesman of English descent (on his mother's side) was shown over the strong room of the head establishment, and the precautions in locks and bolts were duly explained to him.

"What's all this for?" asked he.

"To guard the treasure," said the officers. "Ah!" observed the astute lawyer. "Banks are robbed through signatures, not by burglars." That bank has been more than a decade "a-liquidating."

Early in the 'nineties all the banks except, if I remember rightly, the London and River Plate, suspended payment and obtained *moratorios*, or liquidated. Even that grand institution was said to have been within measurable distance of a stoppage: the run was severe during several days, and the warning is said to have come through a lady. If so, "history repeats itself," even to the saving of this "Capital."

To sum up, those who went through the 'nineties may be happy to have survived to tell the tale. It was a series of disasters, and the principles of "Ishmael" were amply demonstrated even among brethren. To comprehend or know mankind, such an experience is necessary.

I also learnt that next to the disciples of Isaac Walton (to whose votaries I belong) the biggest liar on earth is the farmer, and his accessory is the public press. By believing these two as to the production of any cereal per acre, one may

safely embark on what may be called "false pretences."

But after June, 1890, public works came to a standstill, and civil engineers were at very much of a discount. This endured until 1898, when Roca was again elected President, and there were great expectations and some crumbs for the profession in the shape of extensions of existing railways.

During the early part of the decade I went to Chile in company with a contractor friend to see if anything could be done in the way of putting in a price for the tunnel work of the Chilian side of the Trans-Andine Railway. Nothing came of it; but I had an opportunity of passing the "Cumbre" (pass) on mule back, and looking for the dizzy precipices so much described, or hinted at, before and since Sir Howard Vincent, I think, mentioned something of the sort in a book. I did not find them on the road, or near it, and I believe they are all travellers' imagination and "yarns." I did not see any place where an English schoolboy could not have run about and played leap-frog.

At one point, where the road was both level and wide, there was a long slope to a torrent below; it was the only place which looked

doubtful, and mules, from rolling over and over with heavy packs on, had been lost there, so it was said.

Precisely at this point we met two stray mules, which could have gone on the inside of us as there was room for a four-in-hand on that side. But they deliberately walked down the outside slope and passed round us, without looking at their route, with their cars, as is customary. On the *caracol*, or zig-zag path, down the Chilian side we met on our return a troop of cattle ; but they did not take the path, preferring to walk straight down the hill. The pack mules did exactly the same thing.

At Santa Rosa de los Andes, in Chile, we met an Englishman, who described his hair-breadth escapes "dashing round corners of the mountain passes." He finished up his yarns by informing us that he could not return to his house as his daughter had small-pox. This struck me as an inconsistency ; but I trust both his stories were of the same "order of merit."

All the way after entering the first gorge, some few miles to the west of the city of Mendoza, to a point called Juncal in Chile, a distance little short of one hundred and thirty miles, the landscape is on a gigantic scale.

There is no vegetation worth mentioning—not a single tree. The mountains tower up on every side black, disintegrated, and forbidding in aspect. The road appears to pass through a veritable "valley of the shadow of death."

At that time the railway had been opened to a point about two short days' march from the pass proper; now it has arrived at the foot of the same. It follows the valley of the stream all the way. This, as well as the torrent of the Chilian side, issued from the mountain of Aconcagua, which, unfortunately, is not visible from any point on our route. A gigantic mountain rising from the other side of the valley at the end of the pass, shuts out the view on the north side, where Aconcagua is situated.

The pass is about 13,500 feet above the level of the sea, and had just a suggestion of snow on its summit in the autumn, April. It is closed during three or four months by snow and blizzards. Great herds of cattle are driven across the pass in the summer months; they get a little grass—barely a bite—on the way, and there is a little lucerne at a post-house *en route*. We saw only one dead cow on the whole journey; it had dried up; but condors are plentiful.

About twelve miles of tunnelling has to be done on the Chilian side, and very little on the other, the grades being 7 per cent. The Abt system of rack railway is to be used. Some day a railway will be built over the Planchon pass, near San Raquel, and this will not require a rack, as grades of 4 per cent. can be obtained. The advantage will be great, especially for cattle trains, which should form the principal traffic from the east to the west. I cannot imagine what cargo Chile can send to this republic, except perhaps wine, which at present is far superior to the Mendoza or San Juan article. Nothing will grow without irrigation in the Province of Mendoza, except scrub and stink-weed. With irrigation it will become a second California in fruit production. The grapes of all that region are astounding in size, and of excellent quality. The climate, being very dry, exactly suits them, and the triennial disease common to Europe and Entre Rios is said to be unknown. The finest sorts of French wine grapes will do well, but the Malbeck (not a first-class grape) is more extensively cultivated, as it gives a much larger yield than the others. The result of this proceeding has been bad, and the policy is a wrong one. Poverty

and greed are at the bottom of it. The inhabitants of Chile are said to be either *ricos* or *rotos*—that is, rich or "busted." The latter are naturally a "poor lot."

We traversed the mountains in company with a German merchant who had resided in Chile for forty years or so. When trotting along on the path of the Chilian foot hills we met several of these gentry, and as is customary in the Argentine I "passed the time of day," the *Buenos dias* of the language of Cervantes. They all looked amazed, and answered not a word, whereat my Teutonic friend laughed. "Why?" said I. "Because," said he, "nobody ever salutes that rif-raf (*chusma*)." During all the talk (years afterwards) of the possible Chilian invasion of Argentine territory, etc., etc., I never forgot the remark. I do not think that "serfs" can be made into soldiers to equal the free and independent *gaucho* of our plains. The Chilians never subdued the Arauco Indians (the "Manzaneros"), but the Argentines wiped them clean out on the first and only occasion when they "went for them."

As one looks at Chile from the Cumbre Pass it presents the view of a sea of mountains.

After leaving Santa Rosa de los Andes the

railway follows the valley of the River Aconcagua until within twenty-five miles of Valparaiso. Then it cuts across the most desert country I ever saw (or as bad as any), until close to the coast, where there is a suburb, Vina del Mar, which is passable. Valparaiso appeared to be one long street with a few trees on the side-walks. Also cross streets running to the cliffs, or, I think, sand dunes at the immediate back. No vegetation is visible, and the dunes are covered with mud huts.

Valparaiso signifies the "valley of Paradise," and its "houris" are the tramway conductors, who are as much a surprise as the high-flown name of the city. Politeness forbids a more detailed description.

There is said to be an earthquake some time during every twenty-four hours in Chile. I missed feeling it, being in the train, but my friend got it at Santa Rosa. A very small one —just enough to rattle the windows.

Chile is so narrow that by leaving Santa Rosa at, say, 8 a.m. it is possible to pass several hours in Valparaiso and return to dinner at the former town.

In the year 1894, after the fiasco of a railway scheme which would have cut out the Rural

Tramway and been of immense advantage to the Pacific Railway, I determined to drop my profession till times mended and go in for vineyards with a friend near Concordia in the Province of Entre Rios. These were supposed to be the "El Dorado" in that epoch. I therefore said adieu to Buenos Aires, after having lived there for twenty-one years.

The Province of Entre Rios is well wooded and watered, the soil in the east side (near the Uruguay) is sandy and good for vines. It is also ferruginous in parts, which is better still.

Unfortunately, the locust epoch (seven years) was on; but of course every visitation was supposed to be the last one, and all thought "better times were coming." They didn't. From 1894 to 1898 we were simply swamped by them, in the year 1897 losing 107,000 French rooted vines, which had been planted out on 20 hectareas (50 acres) of land. We had planted half a million slips (*sarmientos*) of the best French wine grape vines.

The locusts arrived in September and laid their eggs, which hatched out in November or early in December. The young ones occupied themselves during January and February in eating up every green thing, and returned north

in March. In this month, daily swarms passed over the district, likewise dined, and slept on the trees round our once smiling umbrageous vineyard. There were therefore three separate guests to provide for, and, their appetites being good, the young plants, after the second eating down, declined to sprout any more. A spell of drought finished them off, and after three years of this "El Dorado," we gave it up, or it gave up us. A Mark Tapley was distinctly required to be jolly under these circumstances.

There was no alternative but to return, late in 1895, to Buenos Aires and go back to the profession. For a year or so I was occupied on some tramway construction work, and then on a survey for a line in Entre Rios, which did not get beyond this initial stage.

This finishes the 'nineties, the worst epoch which the Republic had seen, in my time at least.

Early in the present century came the electric tramways, that marvel of science. It will completely revolutionize travelling and its discomforts, and cause suburbs to spring up everywhere. Mr. Charles Bright initiated this improvement, and the Belgrano Tramway Company bought him out. I think the beginning was in 1898, but it took a long time to

convert the horse trams. The oldest tramway, the City of Buenos Aires, pooh-poohed the new-fangled notion; and then, finding out its mistake, applied in 1903 for permission to alter its traction, which, however, could not then be obtained except under "stiff conditions." Finally, the company had to be sold to the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company, which had been more up-to-date in its policy and had realized a rich harvest in consequence. The former company had declined to fall in with some municipal project of regulations (which would have permitted it to raise the fares twenty-five per cent., from eight to ten cents), thereby inflicting a grievous loss on the shareholders during several years. Finally it was agreed to, with good results. This tramway belonged to what is called the Southern Railway party. Its board had "ancient lights." To these sages American Pulman palatial dining and sleeping cars, as well as electric traction, were "vanities," and the good old style was thought good enough for Argentina. It hardly panned out in practice. New countries are very much up-to-date on occasion, and respond in a pecuniary sense to new conveniences and appliances.

The Pacific Railway had dining cars before any other; also electric lighting in their "sleepers," a great boon. I often wonder why the companies in England have been so long in discovering this method of lighting their trains.

I remember travelling from South Devon to London by a night express, bedless, and with an infernal lamp swimming in oil, thereby making reading impossible. It is not so long ago, and I shall not forget the charm of that journey. Why did not we invent some of the creature comforts of travelling? Even when others invent them, we are so conservative that decades pass before we can make up our minds to adopt them; although from travelling abroad we know the invention, its comforts, and utility. I remember when it was seriously argued among civil engineers in England that the "bogie pin" of American rolling stock was an element of danger. The bogie pin is a king bolt which goes through the body (floor) of the carriage and also through the centre of the cross-beam of the truck (bogie) which carries the wheels. It was thought that if this broke the carriage would become separate from its wheels. *A propos* of this, the following is an absolute fact.

When the American saloon carriages arrived from the States for the Central Argentine Railway, they were put together by English mechanics who had never seen their like before. After running for over a year an in-coming train ran over a cow when about a mile from the terminal station. This jumped the carriage off the line, and also *off its bogies!* The king bolts had never been put in at all; but as the frame of the carriage has an annular ring which sits on another of the bogie, and which permits them to turn or veer on curves, this had held the two parts together till the jolt jumped one off the other. So much for the danger argument.

On the Ensenada Railway all the engine tenders but one were of rigid base; the odd one was on bogies. During a very bad season one or other of the rigid ones was off the line every day, but the American one never once got off.

When, after a year's delay, the Northern Railway managed to supply one goods engine (they had some 240,000 tons of yearly traffic, but none of that name) it came out without a bogie, although specially asked for. It was off the line nearly every day in consequence! The pure "cussedness" of the English merchant in

declining to adopt metre measurements in his wares must cost that country many hundreds of thousands of pounds yearly.

The argument that it takes many years to introduce a new measure or weight among a people is clap-trap. I have seen two complete changes of this sort. One from the Spanish *vara* to the metre and the other from twopenny dollars to four-shilling ones. In neither case was there any noticeable trouble, and in less than six months it had "taken."

Only one remark did I hear in relation to the second valuation, and it was when a tender for a contract was opened. The engineer asked, What dollar does it mean? There must have been a large margin of profit if the latter. Also the washerwomen were put to great efforts of mental arithmetic at first, but they always got the benefit of the doubt. Prices rose all round, it is true, as a result of a bigger unit, but such things right themselves.

I can quite understand, however, that to separate a British master-mechanic from his "one-sixteenth" and his "long thirty-second" must be a heart-breaking divorce, especially seeing that the millimetre is a "foreign" invention. But it will come notwithstanding.

We are nothing if not eccentric according to the ideas of all the foreign "world and his wife."

Towards the end of the 'nineties we broke out in architecture, and demonstrated to the astonished native the vagaries of what masters of the craft call "free classic." I allude to the "Central Argentine Buildings," which grace (or otherwise) the corner of 25 de Mayo and Bartolomé Mitre Streets in the capital. I wonder what the man in the street makes of the name. Fancy "Edificios Argentinos" figuring as a description in Finsbury Circus. "Where's the bloomin' sense of it?" would be asked by 'Arry of his pal.

A previous effort to create a "new school" was the façade of the Trust Company's building in the 25 de Mayo Boulevard, the finest avenue probably in South America. It is the ugliest building there. I have been greatly exercised by native friends seizing my arm and offering to show me "something." Now I know what they mean, and reply: "Oh, I know—Renaissance."

During the 'nineties passed away two of our oldest landmarks. I allude to the Brothers Mulhall, who never changed their position in

spirit or in truth, the editors and owners of the *Standard* daily.

This paper, which was started some forty-five years ago by the above, has had a long and successful career; and it is going strong. Its style was serio-comic and decidedly entertaining. I think that there is no paper extant which had anything quite like the "Editor's Table." Always optimistic and cheerful (as became the possessors of the prospective port of San Blas), they, in "On 'Change" parlance, were ever (Irish) "bulls," never surly "bears."

Both brothers were specialities. "Mike" was a literary man, of quick perception and excitable, the author of books on statistics which are quoted in high places. Edward was very much a man of the world. He had a suasive manner, backed up by a twinkle in the eye and a dash of the blarney which either climbed over, or slipped under, any mistake or oversight of the editorial pen. No man could feel aggrieved after the Editorial (white) hat was lifted as a sign that the *amende honorable* had been made, and the *Standard* cellar was sure to benefit by the "incident."

The great "medicine" was to try to catch the paper tripping by means of a letter sent for

publication by some local Joe Miller. Occasionally the *ruse* was successful, but perhaps the twinkle of the editorial eye was not dimmed by the *double entente.* Anyway, one had to be mighty smart to "run it on to" the brothers Mulhall or Fred Power, the witty "familiar."

The paper is always run on the same lines by another "Mike" and another "Ned," and is duly read and appreciated at the breakfast-table of the faithful. *Plus ça change* (in editors) *plus c'est la même chose—Sui generis.*

The question of territorial limits with Chile got to an acute stage during the last years of the 'nineties, but if Chile had really intended to try a "grab" of that part of Patagonia which lies to the south of the River Negro, she lost her chance by not doing so about 1894, when politics were distracting this Republic. To have been in Chile helps one to understand that there is no room in that country for a very populous nation, and naturally the Chilians, who are called the English of South America, would like to extend their territory. I shall have something to say about this in the next chapter.

Chapter VII.

Doing "Changas" (odd jobs)—Patagonia: the guides—Reason of the Chilian question—Patagonia the sanatorium—Saint Patrick's action—The warrior chief's greeting—Valhalla—Arrow heads—Gold—Strawberries—The Mylodon (?)—Bryan O'Lynn—The Three Graces for exploring—Sportsmen—The careless policy of the Argentine Government—The Southern Railway "little" policy—The Ocean port of the future—Entre Rios—San Rafael in the Province of Mendoza—Hasterotrodia.

After being engaged during many months in an arbitration case on behalf of one of the trunk lines, in which I found it easier to win a doubtful case for my clients than to get paid by them, I did some construction for a railway which was short of hands.

This brings us up to January, 1893, when I went to Patagonia with a friend, on behalf of a syndicate, to survey a proposed railway from the Atlantic to the San Martin Colony, at the foot of the Andes. This was a most interesting trip through a country quite unknown to us,

and, I may add, to those who had described it and counselled our outfit. In central Patagonia nobody turns aside from the beaten track; and any guide (except, perhaps, an Indian) will know nothing beyond the localities where water is to be found on that route. We called them "the guides to the public highway."

Through the kindness of a friend we had been furnished with an Indian guide (?) of whom we discovered: (1) that he was a "pampa" Indian, and had never been anywhere in the region we traversed; (2) that he had been taken prisoner when a boy and brought up in a cavalry regiment in Buenos Aires; (3) that he had learned to drink, and did it very well. We took mules with us from Buenos Aires, and found out on arrival at Comodoro Rivadavia (St. George's Bay) that they were quite useless for our journey. We eventually used bullock-carts; and these are the only ones adapted to the very rough country to be traversed.

To see the ocean again after an interval of thirteen years is charming to an Englishman. The home of our ancestors was said to be the deep, and I suppose they have an hereditary appreciation of a sniff of the "briny."

The service with Patagonia is done by a German line of steamers, a branch of the Hamburg Lloyd Co., I believe. The ships are well found, and all the officers speak English. Great play is made on the *menu* with the dessert, which, being described in detail, one item below another, makes quite a long list. However, considering that there is no competition, I think great credit is due to the pioneer service.

The Captain showed me his charts, dated 1824, I think, and made by that admirable Admiral Fitzroy; one chart was a Spanish one of seventeen hundred and something! The coast is iron bound (for description of this and the people in Patagonia see Musters' interesting work) and the so-called ports dangerous. This steamer was lost on her return journey from Sandy Point (about a month later) in Sea Bear Bay, happily without loss of life. The official enquiry completely exonerated the Captain and officers, as he had been ordered to go into a locality which was not correctly surveyed. The pilot told me that if fogs were prevalent on the coast navigation would be impossible. If anyone intends to visit Patagonia let him read Darwin's remarks on that country previous

to doing so. Their general fidelity is remarkable.

All the continent to the south of the Rio Negro is of a different formation from that to the north of the river, and everything else is also different. In a journey of six hundred miles, extending over four months, I only once saw a grass which was of the same variety as that existing in the Republic proper. The soil is a very sandy loam, except in the valleys of the few rivers, where there is more or less of a clay admixture. In these localities cattle thrive. In the central zone of the country, from the centre of St. George's Bay to the Andes, the track is so good, being of gravel, that a "bike" could travel anywhere along it at a good rate of speed.

The scale of nature is gigantic, there being great valleys and ravines everywhere. Every step up or down is about two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet, and it is all steps up and down in places, especially between the Atlantic and Sarmiento Colony.

On starting from the sea port (or roads) of Coronel Rivadavia the track leads up an immense valley for a distance of forty miles, the grade being slightly in excess of one per cent.,

but the slope is regular. On emerging on the "high pampa" the height above the sea is 2,500 feet; that is, higher than the part of the continent, on the opposite side, between the Andine peaks, which form the chain of mountains.

It is this peculiarity which caused the trouble with the Chilian Government as to the interpretation of the watershed stipulation. As a matter of fact, the rivers run all over the place in the region once in dispute. The "high pampa," however, is only a strip a few miles wide running parallel to the Atlantic coast. It then breaks down, step by step (westward) till it reaches the river Senguer, where the great lakes of Musters and Colahuepé are situated. There are magnificent stretches of clear fresh water abounding in a fish like trout, and of as good a quality.

The surroundings of the lakes are howling wildernesses as regards vegetation: and as a diabolic gale of wind blows at all times, barring the winter season (when ten to twenty degrees of frost are experienced), that region may be called an infernal one, tempered by the said wind, which always blows from west to east, and is "as cold as charity."

This peculiarity is, I think, caused by the Atlantic Ocean being warmer than the land, thereby causing a current of air to be perpetually rising (vertically) off the sea's surface. To readjust the equilibrium, another current of air flows down from the snow-peaked mountain, increasing in violence as it nears the lower levels. In surveying for a railway we had to face this gale during quite two months, and it bent the flag-poles. It was impossible to work with a theodolite, and levelling was difficult, though nearly always possible.

The Boer emigrants have started a colony near Rivadavia Port, and assured me that the quality of the camps was very similar to the Orange State and that the climate also was similar, as this State is a high plateau, although in lower latitudes than Patagonia.

In my opinion the whole work of Patagonia may be taken as of a quality of land to carry from 500 to 1,000 sheep to the square league (6,666 acres)—say an average of 750. Grazing can never improve the camps, and overstocking will ruin them.

There is only a thin stratum of sandy loam overlying the gravel, and this soil, if not held together by the roots of the grass, would be

dispersed by the wind. Nature has acquired a perfect equilibrium between sand, plants, and wind. Even during the most furious gales there is no dust whatever except in the ruts of the track. If a camp fire takes place the equilibrium is destroyed and the conditions altered, to the detriment of the grazier. Only by fencing and sowing grass-seed broadcast when the snows are melting can any improvement be made in the capacity of the camp for carrying stock.

Water is very scarce and is found in the ravines, issuing from their sides in the form of springs. It is pure, and of a delightful temperature. An *al fresco* bath with the thermometer at freezing point is exhilarating, but this must not be attempted in a wind. Putrefaction is unknown during the winter months, and, even in the early autumn, we ate meat sixteen days after it was purchased from the butcher.

As a sanatorium it should rank highly among localities: the pureness of the air is felt, and a nine mile walk after *guanacos* (which are numerous) during the afternoon did not cause any sensation of fatigue to men already worn by the Entre Riano summer, during which

bananas ripen in protected gardens. In all the region we traversed there were no flies nor mosquitos; snakes are unknown, and birds (except near the sea or lakes) very rarely seen. Of course, there were wild ducks on the rivers, also a speckled goose (*Butardo*) which made an excellent *salmi*. Saint Patrick must have visited this region, as toads and frogs do not exist. Pumas are numerous.

In all the country, after leaving the town on the coast, we only saw three white women, and no native-born Argentines except the Tehuelche Indians, who are of course citizens. These last, the "Patagon" (or "giant-foot") of ancient travellers, are rapidly disappearing under civilization and white rum. Their *tolderias* are now far removed from the Atlantic coast, and for the most part near the foot hills of the Andes.

They never were a savage race, and are now quite tame. Near the river Appelé we saw the "field" of the last great battle between the Argentine military expedition and the combined Indian tribes. Some two thousand of these were killed, and the haughty Araucos (or warrior Indians) were destroyed or dispersed. Their corpses were left to the pumas and condors. Human bones are often found

among the grass of the river's bottom, though more than twenty years have passed since the battle. We saw one old chieftain at the San Martin (so-called) colony hard by who had once commanded ten thousand of as fine irregular cavalry as mankind could produce. His star had set; but when he sent a polite salutation from his miserable wigwam, I felt more honoured than if a Lord Mayor had invited me to breakfast. We immediately purchased two fat sheep from the family to assist in the replenishment of the wassail bowl, preparatory to the chief's reception in the Valhalla of his ancestors. There cups will not be wanting to quaff the generous mead.

The panorama of the Andine peaks as seen from the Senguer crossing near the foot hills was pretty, but the mountains are not comparable with those of the same chain near San Rafeal or Mendoza. The "eternal snow" is always an interesting sight, and its colour (or want of it) once seen is always easy to recognise from afar off, the purest of pure white. In certain positions of the sun it appeared of a silvery colour, and even a burnished gold. Nature in all her hues is either lovely or imposing to an observing man, and every civil

engineer should be that—it's part of his trade.

In the cross valleys and broken ground of the foot hills there are great primeval forests of a sort of beech, but we saw only one tree of these; the leaves resembled the "copper" beech of Europe. As there is no formation of earth going on, relics, such as fossils, arrow-heads (these last being out of use for three hundred years or so), etc., are to be picked up on the surface. We made quite a collection of the latter.

Having pitched our camp in a cosy corner in a great ravine, we found that others in centuries past had also been alive to its sheltered condition and had established quite a manufactory of arrow-heads there. It is great fun hunting for these, and greater to be obliged to have them mounted as brooches for our fair countrywomen. An antiquary may appreciate them in their bald condition, but the ladies prefer them mounted.

The ocean on all the Patagonian coast teems with excellent fish, but we generally had dried cod at the hotel on the beach. I suppose it is cold work fishing; perhaps there are fishes a-many but bites a-few. There are also many seals, whose almost human heads popping up

have a weird appearance and, I suppose, gave rise to the mermaid legends.

All the small mussels appear to have seed pearls in them, but I should not advise anyone to start in that line of business.

There is alluvial gold far south at Virgen Point, and we were told that after a "sou'easter" nuggets could be picked up on the beach. A sort of Tom Tiddler's ground, I heard; but only after a storm. There are said to be very rich "placer" diggings on the south side of Fontana Lake, which we just sighted (or rather the hills round it), but the present conditions of life are impossible in such a region. Our cart-man, a German, had prospected during a year in that neighbourhood, and declared that food was most difficult to obtain, though strawberries were plentiful in their season; in fact, there are scores of square miles of these among the foot hills, growing like daisies among the grass. We saw them in the Senguer Valley, and brought numerous plants back with us which have thriven exceedingly.

We were assured by parties there that the piece of skin discovered in a cave and supposed to be that of an antediluvian animal, was the hide of an ancient bull. There are great num-

bers of wild cattle in the mountain forests, where the cold and the hard conditions generally thicken the skins but do not improve the tempers of the "monarchs of the glen." I tell the tale as I heard it; somebody is always finding fault with new inventions.

Guanaco meat resembles old veal, but with ne'er a bit of fat on it, and therefore almost tasteless as a roast. Ostrich is very good any way, but requires a lightning rider to catch it.

Musters says, "Boil your puma." But we never got one, though they stampeded our animals at two springs. There are a few armadillos near the coast which are good eating; also a crested partridge, but this is rare. The cavy, or tailless hare, just enters the region we traversed, being plentiful to the north of the lakes. Latitude 45′ is about its limit.

Although we arrived at Comodoro Rivadavia in the middle of summer (February 4th), we were hardly ever outside of an ulster till we left in June. The biting wind in, say, March, felt far colder than did twenty degrees of frost on one day in May. With this wind the day temperature was never quite down to freezing point; but even in the tent an ulster, besides lamb's-wool singlet and sweater, were grateful.

Visitors to Patagonia, take warning! Do not pin your faith on the thermometer or average temperatures. The Guanaco rugs (*quillangos*) to be bought there for about £2 apiece are the only absolute protection from the cold. Wear them woolly side in; it is not becoming, but it is good sense. Same way on the bed, but put one underneath you. They tear easily.

The Ports are "free," so whisky is cheap, and is the best and only "tipple" required. Three things only are absolutely required as necessaries and "comforts" in a trip of that sort—viz., cocoa, Nestlé's condensed milk, and whisky: then you are proof against country and climate.

Patagonia possesses only one short railway, from Rawson (the capital of the Chubut Colony) to Port Madryn, where the Pacific Steam Navigation Company now call. It was built in the early 'nineties, and is very much a "one-horse" railway, owing, I suppose, to the decline of the colony. It is managed by one of the great Jones clan; the rest absorb the nomenclature of the whole Chubut Valley; but each family has a prefix, such as Llyilon, etc.

At rare intervals we hear of British sportsmen turning up in Buenos Aires on an expedi-

tion of big game shooting. As a rule, nothing happens; but some few go on to Paraguay and have an experience similar to the hunting one already described in these pages.

To find big game to the north it would be necessary either to go very far into the Gran Chaco or to Matto Grosso. Both localities, especially the latter, are unhealthy, and swarm with insect pests. I do not think that, even for an ardent sportsman, the game would be worth the candle. But the region of the Cordillera, westward from the Bay of St. George, contains guanaca, pumas, a special variety of deer, and wild cattle, which last, I heard, were very dangerous when brought to bay.

The climate and scenery are charming, and a consumptive person would improve under such conditions.

Hardships there would be none to a handy man, if only he was provided with a bullock cart and a guide, as were we, who knows how to live in the country. A bullock cart will go up or down any hill. If he came out by the Pacific steamer (after Christmas) to Port Madryn, the German steamer would pick him up and land him in Comodoro Rivadavia two days later. English is spoken everywhere down the coast,

and if our ex-cartman Schultz is still at the latter place, our sportsman could count on having a good time. Expense trifling. Cart and two men, also horses, for, say, £25 a month. Trip to last till end of May—say four months. In case anybody should wish to take my advice, let him drop me a line to Villa Devoto, F. C. P., Province of Buenos Aires, and I shall be pleased to help him further. One good sportsman can always rely on another in such matters. I have drawn many a bead in my time.

Or if he should apply to Menendez and Co., Comodora Rivadavia, he would receive the greatest courtesy and assistance, besides securing the services of the guide already mentioned, or perhaps a Welshman—a Jones.

But the most important thing about Patagonia is the political question, which is of the greatest moment to its possessors (the Argentines), and quite ignored by them in its most important locality.

Unless a narrow gauge railway be constructed from Comodoro Rivadavia to the Andes, passing by the Sarmiento Colony, it will be quite impossible to open up the country, or to compete with Chile for even what there is in the way of business. The Chilians have already

opened two or three roads from the Pacific coast up to the frontier (the one fixed by Colonel Holdich), and there is an abundance of good ports on the Chilian side.

The Argentines are prone to ridicule the quality of grazing lands as described as existing in Patagonia.

All the southern part is populated by English sheep farmers, who have crossed from the Falkland Islands and opened up the country. These people are most in touch with the Chilians through Sandy Point, and (as far as my experience goes) are Unitarians, as are the Chilians. That is, opposed to the Federal system.

I heard that the young Telhuelche Indians of the region of Rio Gallegos speak English, and I have no reason to doubt it. The languages spoken up and down the coast are English and German. The only women in the seaport towns are Chilian.

Chile is such a poor country as compared with the Argentine Republic, that what appears poverty-stricken to the latter would be "nuts" for the former. Little by little the country will be populated from the Chilian side, and their descendants will have Chilian proclivities and

relations in business and otherwise. The fact of the sons being born under the Argentine flag will not amount to the proverbial "row of pins."

If the Argentines let things drift as at present, they may consider that the landmarks put in by the Arbitration Commission are only temporary. To hold a country a nation must populate it, that is certain; and if not—look at the condition of South Africa.

Patagonia will produce a hardy race, superior in physique to that of all the northern provinces of the Republic.

The truth about Patagonia hardly gets to the Government's ears. The Argentines are loth to admit that their possessions are poor.

In all the zone we traversed, agriculture (except, perhaps, a little lucerne at the Sarmiento Colony) is absolutely impossible owing to the terrific winds in the season of spring and the summer frosts. Of course, without irrigation nothing would grow in any case, as droughts are of constant occurrence; during nine months in 1902-1903 it was said not to have rained at all.

Yet the principal newspapers in Buenos Aires often publish statements about the industry in the so-called colonies of the region

which are absolutely incorrect; if a correction is sent to them it gets "burked." Strange stories did we hear, round the camp fire, of the goings on of government officials sent from the capital to inspect and report, etc.; but I have no desire to "give away" my informers or turn government detective. If these remarks are taken seriously I shall consider I have done a very considerable service to the country of my adoption by publishing this book. As for the railway required, a two-feet-six gauge is ample. To talk of a railway of the same gauge as the Southern (5ft. 6in.), as suggested by an official of that "octopus," is preposterous. The region I mention is some 300 to 400 miles from that railway, and the country is quite impassable for the connection of the two railways. What central Patagonia requires is a short "lead" to the Atlantic, not a 600 mile one round by the Rio Negro to Bahia Blanca.

The region north of the lakes Musters and Colahuepé is like Switzerland on a small scale; call a thousand feet in the latter one hundred in the former, and it would be near enough. It is quite impossible to cross such a country from the Atlantic to the mountains.

South of Comodoro Rivadavia I hear it is pre-

cisely the same thing ; but from that port to the river Mayo, or San Martin Colony, there is no difficulty beyond a few grades of 1 in 25 or a tunnel, the former for choice. The five months in Patagonia and *en route* put the shadow back ten years on my dial. This, after fifty, is not to be sneezed at.

In 1904 I made a flying survey from San Clemente Bay on the Atlantic to Trenque Lauquen, a distance of about five hundred miles and crossing the Southern Railway district. It certainly is a very rich zone, but is very poorly served by the company, there being a distance of seventy or eighty miles between the points at which I crossed the branches of that railway. This was precisely on the finest land of the route.

They say that a company has no soul to be saved, or damned. It is lucky if the last alternative be true. The Southern was properly "cussed" by all and sundry throughout the district.

Fifteen years ago the Company formally undertook to build a branch through the blank space alluded to, and did nothing ; now I hear they are going to repeat the promise, and I suppose the rest. It is perfectly astounding,

and the only reason I can assign is that they don't want any more traffic. In fact, the troubles at Bahia Blanca port completely prove this ; but it is rough on the country and land-owners. What are the authorities about?

Later on I crossed from the northern (central) point of the Province of Entre Rios to the River Paraná through the wooden region, making a survey for a narrow-gauge railway to develop the fire-wood and charcoal business.

The last twenty miles, before arriving at the riverine port of La Paz, passed through a region which contains the richest black soil I have ever seen. This had caused the starting of a colony during the boom, which prospered for a time, and then went to pieces, owing to the inordinate cost of cartage to the port. Black earth is admirable for agriculture but not for roads, and the advantages of the first become neutralised by the second.

As an almost absolute rule, the black soil regions of the Republic have about one foot of that quality over what Darwin calls "pampa mud," a reddish clay slightly mixed with very fine sand. This is called *greda.*

But in the locality referred to I observed many feet of black earth where the action of

rain-water had formed ravines. I fancy that this is what is called "black cotton soil" in Egypt. I do not wish to imply that that staple could be grown with profit, but I question whether there is any soil in the Gran Chaco of richer quality than that which I saw.

The sugar-growing district in Tucuman has a very similar soil, but in no other province, to my knowledge, can it be found. I was told that cultivation in maize year by year improves the land, which at first was too heavy for easy cultivation. I can quite believe it.

The Nandubay woods of Entre Rios produce the finest quality of charcoal; there is no harder wood here, or, I believe, anywhere, than this. As a fuel for locomotives it is of 50 per cent. the value of steam coal. But nowadays, without railway carriage and unless in large quantities, no business of this sort can pay—especially where there are such bad roads as on all the ridge of the province of Entre Rios.

The East Argentine Railway had an excellent opportunity to tap the central forests of the province but did nothing.

When one railway proposes to do something, then some other (fancying its zone of control to

be threatened) also offers to do the same, or some similar, thing; then both drop out, and silence returns to the primeval forests.

"Preserve us from competition in our time," is the prayer of many of the railway companies, but if some of them don't "buck up" on occasion, it will be too late. The Entre-riano Railways are always talking about "biting off more than they can chaw"; also, if information published by local papers be true, are disposed to foment agriculture by purchasing land and reselling or renting it to small farmers. I should advise the shareholders to look into what happened as a consequence to similar attempts before they leap into a gap of this sort. "When it's high they'll buy; when it's low must let it go," or rent at a low price, which will be the same thing to them. The company very considerately bought seed, on one occasion, and resold it to the farmers on time. I expect the time for repayment has been greatly extended, and may reach the "Grecian Kalends."

Finally, to bring my story up to date, I made a preliminary survey from the Pampa Central to San Rafael, an old town in the province of Mendoza, a distance of about two hundred miles. This zone is the bone of contention

of several railroads, and, like all similar ones to the west of the province of Buenos Aires, will develop rapidly so soon as a means of rapid transit be provided. This district of San Rafael possesses two rivers, the Diamante and the Atuel; both have rapid currents, and are used to irrigate large areas of land.

After passing the central zone of the continent, where reliance is placed on the water below the soil, this is a paradise of verdure. The soil is admirable for the cultivation of the grape; ferruginous sand being the rule instead of exceptional. A magnet rubbed in the sand of the locality brings up what is called a "beard" of grains adhering thereto. Some day this district will be another California for fruit-growing; especially apples and pears. It is about two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the thermometer occasionally falls 15 degrees below freezing point. The atmospheric conditions appear to be fatal to all blight, as well as mildew and other complaints of the vine, which are said to be entirely absent. Nobody even keeps the remedies for them.

I believe that the mining wealth of this region will admit of great development in the

immediate future. Its possibilities are immense, but so far only Chilians (very shrewd miners) have paid any attention to the industry. The climate of San Rafael is charming. The only drawback to its prospects are occasional severe hail-storms, but these can be insured against by payment of 10 per cent. on the value of the supposed yield.

The Planchon Pass is near San Rafael, and is the lowest and best of those to the north of Rio Negro. I was told that it is not more than seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, and sometimes is open—that is, clear from snow —all through the year. Everything is on a gigantic scale, and men's little works are mere pigmies in comparison with the surroundings.

The enormous area occupied by the Argentine Republic no one has a better opportunity of judging than the railway surveyor who walks over it. No globe-trotter he.

The scarcity of population surprises him at every turn, but he does not fall into the error (common to townsmen) that it is possible to remedy this defect by establishing colonies "here, there, and everywhere." A desert, or unoccupied district, can only be colonised from the edge. To plump a colony down in the

middle is to court disaster. The question of carriage to the market is also paramount; either this must exist, or there must be a certainty that it will not be long delayed. The isolated colony, in which people live by "swapping knives," can hardly be started with success nowadays.

The only race to count upon is the Italian, and this has now discovered North America and the Anglo-Saxon market for immigrants. The Italian can pick and choose; even Africa (central and southern) is available to him. The Argentine Republic had it pretty nearly all its own way once, but those days have gone for ever.

APPENDIX A.

Colonies : and Remarks on Colonisation and Railways.

In addition to the Fray le Muerto and Henley colonies already mentioned, others were organised in the Gran Chaco and to the north of Santa Fé, in both cases bordering on the River Paraná.

These were founded, with the exception of one of Californian origin, by English capitalists, and they were a terror to the Indians. A great deal of money was sunk, with practically no result. The conditions were impossible for agriculture. The only legitimate business was cattle-breeding, and the Chaco Indians had to be counted with. These have now been tamed and induced to work. No fine stock had been imported in those days (during the 'seventies), and the climate was too severe for the pure-bred bulls, although now the cross-breeds from elsewhere do well enough.

The Latin-race emigrants, the only ones available, were useless as "cowboys." An ordinary Italian on horseback appears always to be riding for a fall. I never saw a cow in Lombardy.

Quite lately the discovery that the *Quebracho* tree contains large quantities of tannin, and has a wonderful facility for tanning purposes, created a new industry in that region, but even so, colonisation languished. The Latin races are not axe-men as are the Correntinos and Entrerianos, who work cheaply and well. In my opinion, the climates of the Chaco, the north of Santa Fé, the north of Entre Rios, and the whole of Corrientes are far too hot for all the northern and central races of Europe. Practical experience has convinced me that the limit of shade temperature for such races when working in the fields is 80° Fahr. with still air, and 85° with a breeze. Beyond this they cannot go.

The Chubut Colony.

About the year 1864 a colony of Welshmen was formed on the River Chubut, in Patagonia, where the climate was distinctly suitable. It was never a success. After years of severe

struggle, the production of wheat—which was of excellent quality—kept things going and even made prospects hopeful. But the fall in the price of grain during the 'nineties was a serious blow to the colony. After about thirty years of existence a great flood destroyed the irrigation ditches which had been made by great toil and at the expense of the colonists. Without irrigation no agriculture is possible south of Bahia Blanca, and irrigation can be provided only in the valleys through which the rivers flow. The rainfall is most uncertain all over Patagonia. The rivers are in deep valleys and gorges. Strange to say, the Indians of that region declared that about every thirty years there were disastrous floods in the rivers to the north and centre of Patagonia. The reason given for this in the case of the Chubut was the overflow of the great lakes Colchuapé and Musters, caused by the perpetual winds banking up their outlets by dunes. After many years the water broke through these and caused the periodical floods.

Having seen the locality of the lakes, I can understand and believe in the explanation given. The scale of nature is so great in all that region that no human skill could effect

anything; but timely warnings might be given.

During the Chubut Colony's misfortune the National Government helped them in many ways, and behaved very liberally to alleviate the distress; but things did not return to their previous condition. Later on the law of conscription, which is never understood or appreciated by the Anglo-Saxon races, caused a partial break-up of the colony: about 500, mostly Argentine born, went to Canada—a severe lesson to the country; others went to a new colony situated at the foot of the Andes, called Nineteenth-of-October, and are said to be doing well.

The Welshmen I have met in Patagonia have preserved their characteristics, and appear to be all named Jones—with some prefix.

I think that this will be the last attempt at colonisation by our countrymen; which is much to be regretted, as all Patagonia is suitable for emigrants from cold climates, and will produce a hardy and robust race of men.

Even the copper-coloured Tehuelches have very rosy cheeks—a thing unknown among the Pampa Indians (now extinct) and those of the

Gran Chaco. The Tehuelches are a fine race, but soon to become extinct also.

Yerua Colony.

About the year 1890 the National Government bought a very large area of land, some 130,000 acres, in the Province of Entre Rios, from an English firm, and sub-divided it for colonising purposes.

The lots were, I believe, of 100 hectareas (about 250 acres). The soil of the higher ground was excellent. Very liberal terms were given, and at first it was thought to be a success; but the occurrence of the locust plague during seven consecutive years, a series of droughts, and the prevalence of insect plagues, spelt disaster year after year. There was no net result. The colonists were quite unable to pay the instalments of the purchase money, and had not the Government shown the greatest consideration, nearly all of them would have been evicted.

The colony is situated on the banks of the River Uruguay, has a port, and also a railway through it; but it does not prosper.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to see how any other can hope to be a success in

Entre Rios. Everything reverts to cows or sheep. The harvests are very precarious in all the provinces; a bumper harvest of wheat, which may be gathered once in four or five years on an average, does not produce more than eleven bushels to the acre (that of England during the last decade was thirty bushels), and the average of the last eight years would probably not reach seven bushels.

The heat is very great in summer. I took the maximum temperature at 2 p.m. during one year, and it averaged nearly exactly 90° Fahr. for the three summer months. I have seen it 104°.

Oranges grow well in the northern half of the province, and I don't think that wheat will ever be a good or certain crop, except perhaps in the extreme south of the province.

Maize is very subject to drought, and the locust plague is fatal to its production ; whereas wheat escapes, but is sometimes attacked by a caterpillar. An insect plague (the *bicho moro*) generally destroys the potato crop, as also the tomatoes.

I knew a most intelligent Italian, near Concordia, who cultivated 250 acres with the assistance of his family and one employé. I

observed his operations during four or five seasons, and everything commenced well, but ended very badly indeed. He was quite exceptionally capable, and used modern American machinery. The result was absolutely *nil*, and he abandoned the undertaking, getting away with difficulty. I hear that he is now prospering in the south of the province of Buenos Aires.

The Province of Entre Rios is a charming one to live in. It has clear streams and shady nooks and corners, besides gravel in parts; but to make a living by cultivating the soil is quite another thing,

The Jewish colonies formed by Baron Hirsch can hardly be taken as a criterion, being bolstered up by premiums or monthly allowances paid out of a rich fund. Even so, however, I believe that they are far from prosperous.

I have heard strange stories from men who have managed these colonies. One assured me that while the few good families sold what they had and went off to occupy themselves in trade of the "peddling" description, the bad ones had to be paid to go. I cannot believe that such people are of any use as agricultural colonists; but their sons may develop into

something fitter, as they abandon the curious and out-of-date habits of their fathers.

The trading instinct is strong within them, but they are not appreciated in that capacity.

Sampacho Colony.

This colony is situated in the Province of Córdoba.

It appears to be the only successful one of those of the National Government origin, except, perhaps, one in Misiones, which is quite isolated at present and in a far-away territory.

I visited it (Sampacho) some few years ago and it appeared to be prosperous, having escaped the locust visitation of the 'nineties. It has a railway.

Central Patagonia.

About the so-called colonies of Sarmiento and San Martin the less said the better. They exist only on the map, and agriculture in either of them is impossible. The reports which the Government receives on the subject appear to be absolutely misleading.

The perpetual gales of wind would prevent any agriculture; but cattle and sheep will do well, the water and grass being good.

Here again colonists from Spain or Italy will

be quite out of their element. The climate is colder than Scotland. Only a hardy race as from the north of Europe can do anything in Patagonia, and its members should be married. A single existence in such a wilderness would be unendurable.

Santa Fé and Córdoba.

In the time when land was cheap, certainly not worth more than £1,000 a square league (6,666 acres), many colonies were formed in the province of Santa Fé. Later on, others were founded in Córdoba.

The former were distinctly successful, as wheat at that time had not to compete in the world's markets with that of other countries, the supply being hardly equal to the demand in the country itself, and prices were very good. The prosperity of the second group is doubtful. They commenced much later, with land at inflated prices, and have a drier climate.

A Virginian said many years ago: "The more you know about agriculture (in Córdoba), and the more capital you put into it—the sooner you will be ruined."

The first colonies of the Central Argentine Railway were a complete failure. Of late they

appear to have done better; probably the lands have passed into the hands of small capitalists.

Their conditions were different from those of the others, as they were dry-nursed, at a ruinous cost, by the Land Company.

Land Available for Colonies.

Every now and then we hear of "fiscal lands" available for colonisation, somewhat on the lines of the North American homestead law which obtains in Canada. Where are these fiscal lands?

I think I know as much as most men on the subject, and my impression is that there are no fiscal lands except in Misiones which are suitable for colonies. Misiones has one or two (already alluded to) which are far from any market and in a very warm climate, besides being without easy transport; this, however, will come in time. The locust does not appear to trouble that region.

These colonists are Poles—a fine, strong race. I fear that they will do little good—beyond making a living. The present Governor of the territory is a most capable man.

Let us take the Gran Chaco.—Here we have an immense area in semi-tropical conditions, too

hot for all the Germanic races and warm enough for the emigrants from the south of Italy and Spain, who are not great at agriculture or any other manual labour.

The climate is most irregular and runs into extremes; either several years of drought or consecutive seasons of flood. I am told it is like a soup plate in shape, fills with water from all sides, and empties itself slowly by a few watercourses.

Insect pests are abnormal, troubling even cattle. It is too hot for sheep; agriculture is very difficult except on the bank of the Paraná, and there doubtful. Cotton will grow, as will many other things; but will they pay?

What is the newly arrived colonist to do in such a wilderness? As a rule he knows nothing on arrival (the Jewish emigrants painted their bullocks so as to recognise them of a morning), and he will certainly learn nothing there.

Take Patagonia. Here the soil is poor to a degree, a sandy loam of trifling thickness over gravel. Probably the mountain (Andes) region is susceptible of great development, but until it is connected to the Atlantic by a narrow gauge railway it will be practically useless, except as a dumping-ground for the *rotos* (serfs) of Chile,

who are not desirable for various reasons. At present a large portion of the trade of that region goes to Chile, and the Argentines look on and appear not to care. On a trip of 600 miles in Central Patagonia I did not meet one Argentine. Taking one square league with another only 1,000 sheep can live thereon—and this is where there is grass. Probably, taking the whole of Patagonia, only 500 square leagues could be carried.

The conditions for this stock are good, but there is no market for wethers until a refrigerating establishment shall be started at Comodoro Rivadavia, which is only a roadstead. In fact, Port Julian is the only natural port south of Port Madryn in the bay of New Gulf (Golfo Nuevo).

To make a safe port at any of the other roadsteads will cost quite half-a-million of pounds sterling; but by building a mole at Puerto Comodoro Rivadavia a tolerably good service could be given—at least, sufficient for many years.

So surely as there is good grass for cattle in a river's valley, so surely did we find that it was private property; but there may be exceptions. The fiscal lands are worth next to nothing on

the high grounds—that is, out of the river bottoms.

Water is very scarce. It is only to be found in gulleys (as springs) in the Pampa region, that is, as far as the foot hills of the Andes. On any area of one square league it would be even betting as to whether or no water could be found.

The camp could be improved in places by fencing and the sowing of grass seed, but this would require considerable capital.

Fancy a new arrival from Lombardy (who has probably never seen a sheep) being landed in such a region, which is colder than Scotland. As a quarter of a square league was what the Government intended to give to each emigrant he certainly would not make his tailor's bill out of its product.

Emigrants from the North of Europe would do well provided they had, say, £400 as a minimum ; but they would have to rove about the country, and for this a railway is required from Comodoro Rivadavia to the Rio Mayo, to which the emigrants could bring their wool and whence they could receive their yearly stores. They would have to "trek" like the Boers—or as I hear is done in some of the western of the United States.

Finally, we may go west into the provinces of San Luis or the pampa region extending up to the Andes.

Here *alfalfa* will grow, and the land may become very valuable for the fattening of stock, but railways are required. A colonist has no means of starting this cultivation or stocking the land.

Only capitalists can benefit by such regions, and the 100 hectareas (or even quarter-league) ceded to an individual would be worth practically nothing to him.

How Colonies may be Formed.

The only possible way to form *bonâ fide* colonies would be for the National Government to purchase first-class land in excellent condition as regards water or rail carriage, subdivide the land, and sell it in small lots on time to married settlers, or, better still, give it to them,

This certainly will not pay in a financial sense, but the influx of good people, and the children resulting therefrom, would result in a material gain to the wealth of the country. Undoubtedly the Yerua Colony is a gain to the nation, even supposing that the arrears of the purchase money should never be paid.

The Provincial Government, by founding towns upon a purchased area of four square leagues according to established custom, could act in a similar way; in fact, on the ground surrounding the existent camp towns there is always considerable agriculture, and many of the labouring classes prosper.

I have never advised an English labourer or small farmer to come to this country on chance. It never can equal or approach the colonies of the British Empire for such as he and his. The Italians, though not as strong as the Anglo-Saxon, are more adaptable in every sense; but they live very poorly, and often overwork their offspring, even the young girls. I think the cross between an Italian and an Argentine woman is inferior to the old-time native, who was essentially a good cowboy, and worked well on horseback.

During ten years I—in company with a relation—was interested in the cultivation of a large area of wheat in the province of Santa Fé. There was a steady loss on the account, but it enables me to speak from practical experience.

Next to the gentle angler, farmers when describing their crops are the biggest liars on

earth. This I did not know at first, being taken in by their peculiarity (as stated in the Press) and the clap-trap concerning virgin soil.

No doubt in the rivers' bottoms in districts where certain trees grow which shed their leaves in autumn, a black soil of great richness is found. Also the soil in the Province of Buenos Aires, north of the city and south to Dolores, with a width of say 100 miles, is very good. Also on the ridges (plateaus) of Entre Rios; but that of all the region which contains fiscal lands is nothing particular in quality. The south of Santa Fé is similar, for a like distance from the Paraná, to that of Buenos Aires. All these soils are much improved by manure, and as mixed farming comes into fashion this will be applied with great advantage to the crops.

The German emigrants have not been a success, as the conditions were not favourable to the Teutonic races.

At first some of the colonies in Santa Fé were formed by men of that race, but little by little the Italian element preponderated, and even supplanted them.

The northern races were out of their element. Their manners are bluff or uncouth; they will

not stand the injustice which is—or was—dealt out to them by the minor justices of the peace. This is distinctly to their credit, but does not assist them to assimilate with the natives.

In Patagonia, where there are few or no authorities, and no Federal system, they would be more at home. Also in large colonies, with their own countrymen as administrators and local authorities, they might do well. But the law of conscription, however it may meet the ideas of the educated natives (who dodge it), is not conducive to the well-being of the farmer class, whose sons are too often spoiled by being introduced to town scenes and doubtful companions. In fact, a repetition of what many fathers of families fly from in Europe.

On the other hand, the United States, Canada, and other English colonies offer a much better field for the sons of European emigrants. There a law of conscription is next to impossible, and in any case would be carried out on totally different lines. These sons would really have a say in the administration of the country, as the possession of a vote would not be the hollow farce it is here.

A Judge of the Supreme Court of the United

States, who had journeyed through the south of Brazil, and observed the German emigrants there, told me that in the United States all the emigrants from the north of Europe had, on arrival, very little knowledge of farming matters; but that by being brought in continual contact with the smart farmers of the West, they soon acquired proficiency, and in twenty years were possessed of a homestead and an assured future; whereas the colonists seen in Brazil had learnt nothing, and would never get beyond truck farming. That is it in a nutshell.

The Italian cultivation here, during the 'nineties, was a wretched specimen of antiquated methods and exploded ideas, and I very much doubt if they will ever be able to approach the North Americans in efficiency.

As railway labourers or simple ploughmen they are excellent when working under a "boss." But beyond this their ideas are small and ways mean; they are even penurious in their mode of living. An attempt to induce them to pay a high price for good seed, or to plough deep, would meet with little response. How they were ever induced to buy American machinery was always a mystery to me.

They invented a broad share plough; broad

and extremely shallow, to get over much ground in a day; it made a "hard pan" at a depth of four inches, and this had a disastrous effect on the wheat crop all over the province of Santa Fé. The average, even in good seasons, never passed ten bushels to the acre, and one year with another, during the decade of the 'nineties, it did not exceed six bushels. At last the Government had to give seed to prevent collapse.

In the province of Buenos Aires and extreme south of Santa Fé the climate is more genial for wheat, and a good season may mean fourteen or eighteen bushels to the acre (half the English yield), But one year with another the average will not pass eleven—in fact, what is general all over the world except in Canada, which is exceptional.

The region of the Pampa Central may produce wheat in favourable seasons, but the rainfall is very uncertain, and the average yield will not exceed eight bushels to the acre. It therefore cannot be calculated on as a genuine business.

The irrigated zone of the province of Mendoza produces a much larger yield than any of the others. This probably reaches thirty bushels

to the acre, and the crop is certain if it escapes the hail storms, which can be insured against at, say, 10 per cent. of the declared value of the production.

In the present immense zone under tillage it is doubtful whether climatic influences will ever destroy the entire crop, but a mixed system of farming will always be safer than adhering to one item, as has been too often the case.

The locust, which appears to follow the old rule of seven years' visitation and an equal period of absence, does little harm to the wheat, but destroys the maize crops in Santa Fé and Entre Rios. The insects rarely come south of the city of Buenos Aires.

Maize is also very subject to drought. This is not so fatal to wheat, which ripens very early : that is, before the great summer heat comes on. In wet years the maize crop is very heavy, but the roads become so bad in the alluvial (black) soil districts that the cost of cartage becomes a very serious item ; this often exceeds two shillings a league ; in fact, my experience all over the country is that that price per league is a fair average.

Maize is very badly cultivated as a rule—in fact, hardly cultivated at all, there being far too

many plants to the acre and weeds being allowed to grow.

Linseed is a very exhausting crop, and its cultivation was at one time forbidden on land rented for a term of years; this was in Santa Fé.

In the wheat fields no attempt is made to check the weed growth after the harvest; these seed and cause great harm in places to the subsequent crops—troublesome prickly weed and thistles grow. I think that if the fields were to be ploughed again after harvest, and maize roughly sown, the result would repay the extra ploughing.

I once sent specimens of the wheat grown in the north of Santa Fé to two of the principal seedsmen in London. The report of one said that he had never seen a smaller grain; the other begged the question.

Compared with six classes of wheat selected and sent out to me by the first, I found that a measure (a box with sliding lid) of sample sent from Santa Fé weighed that of the other grains but contained *twice* as many seeds. From this it was plain that the farmers sowed too much seed, as well as doing so in a most careless manner—broadcast.

It is difficult to imagine anything more careless from start to finish than the method which obtained in the 'nineties; and I do not believe that any profit was made in Santa Fé during that decade; that is, if the farmer's labour and that of his family be taken into account.

The Provincial Governments (the vampires of the producer) put an excessive trade tax on threshing-machines, which had for result economies in their repairs, and quite 10 per cent. of the grain was lost in the threshing. These governments taxed the land, the produce, and the machinery employed to obtain the latter; a proceeding which a North American farmer declared to be monstrous, and unknown in the United States. I have only known a few North Americans who attempted agriculture, and none who made it pay.

Up to the year 1890 the production of wheat was barely sufficient for the local consumption, and the price rose according to the demand, being often quite twice the price which has ruled since.

In competition in the European markets the average price to the farmer at the nearest railway station will not exceed £4 per ton, or, say,

17s. a quarter of 480lb., of which one fourth used to be paid for threshing.

Even allowing two quarters to the acre (16 bushels) the result is paltry; it can only be improved by using better seed, and by a more modern system of cultivation and harvesting.

The headers (reaping-machines for cutting off the heads only) were responsible for great loss of stacks. These were not thatched, and a rain storm wetted them right through. These machines were much used in Santa Fé. Add to this the exposure of the grain in sacks at the railway stations, where little or no care was taken to protect the produce (whilst waiting for waggons) and we have a state of things which nearly ruined agriculture in its infancy.

The railways—till quite lately—did their best to ruin their clients, and the Government was greatly to blame for allowing it. It seemed extraordinary that powerful companies could not, or would not, afford to provide cover for their best traffic. With a square league under agriculture, its population may be as high as eighty persons; whereas with the old system of cattle ranch, it would not reach eight—and even those but "nomads."

Maize also suffered terribly from being

stacked in the wet at stations, and also, in the tropics, from heating in consequence of not having been properly dried before shipment. Anything more disastrous than the first ten years of agricultural production in competition with the rest of the world can hardly be imagined. The wonder is that it survived at all.

It always appears to me that the railways have far too few stations or stopping places, such as loading sidings, on their lines. In agricultural districts there should be such facilities every six miles. During the dead season the loading sidings could be closed by taking out the point rails; and during the rest of the year the modern interlocking points and signals would reduce the risk of accidents to a minimum. As a rule the actual stations are twelve miles (or more) apart, and the cartage charges are often prohibitive or ruinous to the producer in wet seasons.

Supposing even that the same freights were charged from the intermediate siding as from the farthest station from the point of consignment (say port) the result would be convenient and economical to the farmer. A saving to the latter of even one shilling per ton in cartage

charges would be welcome in these days of severe competition. Many landowners would, no doubt, erect sheds to store the grain if an intermediate siding were proposed on such terms. It is an open secret that some of the big lines do not want any more grain traffic at certain points, and the rolling stock is rarely sufficient for the requirements of the lines—never in time of abundant harvest. Surely a part of their reserve funds could be invested to greater advantage in sidings, rolling stock, and grain sheds, than in what are called good securities. It is astonishing what ignorance exists among railway men as to the difficulties which beset agriculturists in their struggle for existence. As I have unfortunately a very precise knowledge of these, I once cross-questioned a farmer whose wheat fields were a delight to the eye. At last he admitted that the probable result would be nothing worth having—*una miseria*, as he expressed it. This was in the best region to the north of the city, and near a railway.

Most small farmers have no idea of what competition means in the European market, and that the margin year by year can rarely vary beyond a trifle per ton. Hope springs

eternal in their breasts that prices may run up to a bumper for them; and year by year they plod along applying this flattering unction to their souls. Far better for them to study the quality of the seed and labour-saving appliances on their side, and for the railway to do as suggested on the other; there is room all round for improvement. In this combination lies the great future of the industry. I have often said that every manager of a railway in an agricultural district should be obliged to cultivate an area—subject to his own by-laws. The result would astonish him and make him merciful and considerate to others. When I was doing pioneer agricultural work in Santa Fé I had to pay exorbitant rates for the carriage of the seed to sow and the hay (from lucerne) to be transported. I sold the baling machinery in disgust and turned in cattle, which gave no traffic to the railway. Several years afterwards I was requested by a new manager to try again! "No—not for Joseph" was my answer. I then had 640 acres in lucerne, which would certainly have given 1,000 tons of hay yearly to the railway,

These examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely on both sides, except, of course,

where there is competition. Nobody hears of complaints in the districts where the Western and Pacific lines compete, but in the Southern districts they are endless.

I travelled a distance of 500 miles across that country in a carriage and going slow. I did not meet one man who had a good word to say for the Southern Railway—and I never heard a complaint when in the region crossed by the Pacific Railway.

Neither of these railways has, as far as I know, a salted capital; in other conditions as to this, they must sweat it out of the public; but where are the authorities that such a thing should be allowed? Fancy the Midland and Great Western railways of England depositing a bill in Parliament for amalgamation, and one of them getting one and a half share for one of the other in the reconstruction! Shades of Lord Farran, or other authority!

It is puerile to accuse me of depreciating anybody (or my own countrymen, as people may say) by telling all this. I consider that it is doing them a service. The boards in England often do not know the truth, and here there is often much ignorance and much of the "it's-only-the-'bally-Italian'" sort of remark

among railway men. If the truth had been known about the British Army before the war in South Africa, the financial result would have been different, and there might have been no "blood-tax." Immense corporations are a curse to a country, and the advantage to the producer of "fusions" or "amalgamations" is *nil*; especially when new deals in shares are the result of the same.

These, I presume, must come as a matter of course. Immense corporations cast a baneful influence over the Press, the tradespeople, and the personalities of our countrymen here, and their influence may reach even to the law courts of the country. One railway company had three influential lawyers in its employ—one was said to be on the floor, another on the ladder with the hod, the third being the master-mason with the trowel. The last is very much that at present.

I do not think that a monopoly is good for anybody or anything. It is the writing of "Les désirs accomplis," said by the French to be the most terrible of all epitaphs.

I believe that this opinion is shared by far more competent and experienced men than myself, both here and in England. A monopoly

breaks down a country and digs its own grave, as a badly-constructed bridge was said to end. The engineer who made this remark added, "and falls into it." It is true!

At one time the Royal Mail steamers charged £70 for a first-class passage to England. The food was ordinary, the wines dear and bad, the voyage long and tiresome. Why has all this changed? By force of circumstances—that is, competition.

The curse of the sincere railway manager is the mistaken notion in England that at most times, and under nearly all conditions, the working expenses of a railway should be 50 per cent. of the gross receipts. It ties the manager's hands and tempts him to starve the road in repairs. Things often get quite down at heel on a big railway simply by the sweating system being applied to get down to this rate. Also, no manager should be allowed to be a shareholder. Having got down to 50 per cent. (on the few lines where it is possible) the manager must needs go several points better, and year by year do better still. This is probably caused by pressure from home, but I am not so sure of that.

I once discussed this question with Mr.

Barker, the smartest London secretary of any at that period. He was not managing director then, but it was an open secret that he managed the whole Board. His answer was: "The only criterion of management is the net result." This is evident, and the following example, which I put to him, was more or less a fact:

Suppose a suburban line which by high rates prevents any advance of population of the middle or lower classes, catering almost entirely for the richer one. In this case we will say that the gross receipts were £100,000, expenses 50 per cent.—and net receipts £50,000.

Now comes a cheap rate man who caters for the multitude, encourages house-building, etc. After a time the gross receipts rise to £150,00, expenses to 60 per cent.—net £60,000. What happens? Simply that the first policy is *approved* because it keeps the expenses at the figure of 50 per cent., and the second *condemned* because (although the net receipts are better) the ratio of expenses to receipts is 10 per cent. higher.

In Australia at that time the working expenses of the railways were nearer 70 per cent. than 50 per cent., but this was not admitted as an argument.

Of course I know I am "preaching in the desert"; but it appears to me that when a man writes a book of this sort he ought to empty his head into it and tell the truth about everybody and everything concerned.

Thus of late years the gigantic railways have had in their employ men who had not the faintest idea of conventional decency—were never taught it.

On quite two occasions, on different lines, the accountants would advertise for book-keepers, etc., under initials, to find out if they had any *discontented men.* Lured by this subterfuge, men (who naturally wished to better their position) would answer the call, and either be "dropped into" in consequence, or their *dossier* blackmarked (blackmailed, I think I might say), even without the victims being aware of their misdeeds! I wonder who paid the cost of the advertisement. Not the accountant, I opine.

On another big line anonymous letters were treated as serious and *bonâ-fide* communications, being sent to be reported on to, and by, the higher officials. Undoubtedly a railway company must employ detectives, but not in this fashion, which is unworthy of a prosperous (or, in fact, any) joint stock company.

It is an old saying that a company has no conscience; but that does not mean that it should be wanting in justice or common decency. In England, under the nose of directors and shareholders, such things can hardly happen. Fancy the passengers of the Continental express (*viâ* Dover) being made sea (or road) sick day after day by the heaving and pitching of the cars between Charing Cross and the sea. Yet this has happened again and again on lines whose ratio of working expenses was under 50 per cent.

After many years' experience as resident engineer on a starved road, I am convinced that the locomotive is an intelligent "construction," and does its best to stick on to the rails, knowing full well that to travel far in the mud is impossible. And the carriages "follow their leader."

If it were not for this, the reserve funds would suffer severely through claims for personal damages.

Appendix B.

Climate and soil.

THE area of the country is so immense, and it extends over so many degrees of latitude, that a detailed description of either the soil or the climate would be far too lengthy and uninteresting for a book of this sort.

In addition, therefore, to the remarks already made in the text, I will only add a few which may be useful to any native of the north of Europe (including my countrymen) who may be desirous of coming to the country as an agriculturist, or in any other calling which will oblige him to be out of doors during the day.

It is of little use to mark out areas, and apply hard and fast rules; but the following suggestions will be found useful and approximately correct.

In all Patagonia, and as far north as Buenos Aires city, a man can work outside at all times; but in the latter neighbourhood he should work

early and late, resting from noon to 3 p.m. in the months of January and February, which are midsummer. From Buenos Aires city to the latitude of 100 miles north of Rosario he had better not work after mid-day during those months.

From the last-named limit to Córdoba and the northern boundary of Entre Rios no work can be done after mid-day during three months of the year. And from these limits northwards it is useless for a man to go. This includes the Gran Chaco.

As mentioned previously, 80° Fahr. (shade temperature) with calm, and 85° with breeze are the limits for a white man of our race when exciting himself with physical labour. Above these temperatures perspiration is excessive; any slight exertion causes it; and dyspepsia will result from excessive water-drinking.

Statistics of average temperature give little or no idea of a climate to the man in the street.

I once came out with a gentlemen great in averages (almost a "general one") and to him Rio Janeiro was—in theory—quite temperate. We met at the hotel in Montevideo one day in February. He was sitting with his head in his hands in a sort of stage attitude, and said I:

"How about the average temperature?" He only shook his head in reply; his cup was full!

All Patagonia is arctic when the west wind blows. Clothes such as are required in the extreme north of Scotland will be necessary for comfort during nine months of the year. For the rest I think it is better to have thick lambs-wool underclothing for cold weather than other winter garments. Put the top-coat next the skin, so to speak. In the province of Buenos Aires the winter is often very cold, and a suit of winter clothes will not be a useless expense to a man who can afford it. There is no particular harm in having an astrakan overcoat for the capital. It always suggests a man capable of discounting bills. But it may also tend to increase sundry expenses.

As to agriculture, only general remarks are possible; but these are perhaps necessary.

When in England in 1872 I happened to be sitting round a yule log in a country inn, and was the butt of enquiring yeomen. "Do radishes grow in America?" asked one. I assured him on this point. "Lor', do they, now?" was his comment. I only remember this item of our conversation, but it is a good sample of the rest.

This reminds me of a London landlady who

asked me if I advocated the use of mustard leaves in place of the old system. I replied that I found them too hot. "Lor', do you!" said she, "and do they use them abroad?" "They do," said I. "Ah, them foreigners do 'ave such thick skins!" was her summing up of the rest of the world outside of her own. It is always the Yahoo opinion, which exists even in the great cities.

Therefore, as to agriculture, radishes and mustard included. In Patagonia little or nothing can be done except in the sheltered valleys of the Andine foot-hills, and its advisability there is governed by the means of transport. Along the Chubut River excellent wheat is produced, but the area is limited. Lucerne may grow in the Senguer Valley; but I do not think the heat of the sun is sufficient to make hay of it. Of course irrigation is absolutely necessary in all Patagonia, except, perhaps, in the foot-hills as mentioned.

From the River Negro to the latitude of Córdoba may be considered the wheat region, but diminishing in yield from the northern boundary of the province of Buenos Aires to the north. This, of course, is due to the rise in temperature, which is abrupt in the north-

eastern corner of Entre Rios. This is the corner occupied by the "sons of Belial," as may be conjectured.

Also the average yield diminishes from a degree of longitude, say, at 100 miles westward of the city of Buenos Aires, to the west. This is owing to the vagaries of the rain-fall, which decreases as the distance from the sea or River Plate increases. Linseed appears to follow wheat, but is a more precarious crop. Maize should grow from the latitude of Bahia Blanca to the extreme north of the Republic, but is precarious north of Rosario, owing to the inroads of locusts and drought. Also from 300 miles westward of the city of Buenos Aires to the Andes the irregularity of the rain-fall is such that it must be a very doubtful crop. With irrigation near the Andes it should produce well.

Tobacco is grown in Córdoba and Corrientes, as well as in the tropical provinces, Tucuman, etc., but is very strong and rank. Its export from any part of the Republic to Europe is very doubtful as a business.

All the cigars made in the country are of very poor quality ("stinkers"), but I believe that fairly good ones could be made in Tucuman.

I saw some once, made by an Englishwoman at Lulas, which were passable.

Any tropical plant will grow in the black soil of Tucuman ; but malaria is rampant, and its effects are disastrous to a white man.

The provences of Mendoza, San Juan, Córdoba, Rioja, and Catamarca are excellent for wine grape growing. Also at Concordia, in Entre Rios the industry is followed ; but the vines suffer from the three infirmities common to damp climates, but as a set-off there are cheap freights. Grapes will, of course, grow all over the province of Buenos Aires and Santa Fé, but require attention owing to the damp climate. The muscatel grapes suffer most.

Oranges are produced in Corrientes, Misiones, and the north of the province of Entre Rios ; but the last-named can hardly compete with Paraguay, which has a perfect climate for this fruit.

Standard apricots, peaches, and plums will grow from Bahia Blanca to the latitude of Córdoba, and north of the province of Entre Rios. The climate of the north of the province of Buenos Aires appears perfect for these.

Apples are of very poor quality everywhere ; but if good sorts were planted south of the

province of Buenos Aires, and in the Neuquen, or Mendoza, the result should be satisfactory. Pears would follow apples, and grow extremely well in the province of Buenos Aires.

Coffee is grown in the province of Salta, but only in a small way. I hear it is of excellent quality. Englishmen are the pioneers of this industry. Sugar is, of course, cultivated in the tropical region of Tucuman, and rice to a small extent. Peanuts grow well near Concordia and Entre Rios, and potatoes everywhere up to the latitude of Córdoba, but suffer greatly in places (especially Entre Rios) from an insect pest, the *Fraylesco* or *bicho moro*, which also destroys tomatoes.

There is a boom in Chaco lands, owing to the fact that cotton will grow in that region; but I doubt whether it will be able to compete with the negro labour of the English colonies.

To sum up, it is a well-known fact that all crops depending on rain-fall are very precarious all over the Republic, except, perhaps, in the tropical region. The droughts are periodical and severe. Half the cattle in the province of Entre Rios were said to have died during a late year's drought. In 1893-4 there was a

terrible drought in the north of the province of Buenos Aires—no grass anywhere.

Any railway company depending on the cereal harvests should never be seduced into paying more than, say, 5 or 6 per cent. in "bumper" years, and should build up a reserve to help out the dividend of the lean ones, which are sure to come. This would be good policy, but will not suit those "in the know," or speculators. A bad harvest naturally reduces the spending capacity of its whole district. Then people drop back to meat and *maté*.

Sheep will thrive in all Patagonia, the only complaint being scab, which is communicated to them by the *guanacos*. Darwin mentions this as existing among the latter. Also sheep do well in all the rest of the Republic up to the latitude of Córdoba and the south of Corrientes, but in San Luis and Mendoza goats do better. Cattle do well everywhere if the grass and water are suitable. In Patagonia they thrive on the grass of the river valleys, but not on the "high pampa."

Appendix C.

Character, etc.

After living nearly all my life among the Argentines I may pretend to a knowledge of their character. In all truth I may say that they have innate qualities which should insure the continual advance of the country, and they have others which will make that advance but slow.

In the first place, liberty in religious matters has always been a strong point with them. Even during the years of 1868 to 1870—when I was living in Córdoba, which had been shut off from the rest of the world, and was the head centre for religious denominations and old-world customs—there was nothing to complain of in their treatment of "heretics." The clergy were very amiable.

It is true that one was looked upon as a man of peculiar ideas, and, perhaps, as a Freemason, but the doors of the best houses were opened to

an educated man, and no further questions were asked.

In the cities of the Littoral there never was, in my time, any visible prejudice against Protestants, even before the civil marriage law came into force, which broke up the Church monopoly.

The Argentine is always polite, even dignified, in his bearing—I mean all classes of him.

A "bounder" is unknown among them. By "bounder" I mean a man who pretends to be what he is not, and enforces the argument by bluster or bluff.

Rudeness on their part is almost an unknown quantity, and when indulged in by others at their expense is generally put down to eccentricity of character, for which our countrymen figure in the first line here as elsewhere. Why should this be so? This, like drinking to excess, appears to be passing away from the better class of Englishmen, which is certainly a distinct advance.

I have never observed anything snobbish about an Argentine; by this I mean rudeness arising from the belief that the accident of fortune, or birth, justified a haughty bearing. This may come in somewhat with the large

fortunes, which are quite of modern date, but I have never observed the tendency. A man can be perfectly candid with the natives in times of trouble, and they will not think the worse of him in consequence.

The race is distinctly sober, and was extraordinarily so up to 1875. After the Paraguayan war there was an alteration in this respect among the lower orders. Also the development of the wine-growing business in the Western provinces has made a certain difference, but not in a great degree. A visit to England, and especially a manufacturing town, after years spent here, causes a painful surprise, and not a very exalted idea of the so-called working classes.

A Bank Holiday at, say, Greenwich, and about the London termini, quite "*fills the bill.*" For this reason the English race of the labourer type have always been a failure here; and even the mechanic class, except locomotive drivers (who are of a superior class), had better stop away.

One of the best qualities of the natives is their kindness to their relations. This, however, is apt to degenerate into nepotism all over the country, and the appointing of a host of officials

who have retaining-fee salaries for doing a short day's work. This brings down salaries to less than the living wage for a man with a family, and causes jobbery in every department. Half the employees, with double the salaries, and double the working hours, would greatly improve matters all round.

The argument that a government has nothing to do with the state (married or single) of its employees is clap-trap. If men remain single, what must happen to the future generation which will certainly come along somehow—or anyhow?

The curse of the country is the so-called Federal system, which thrives upon what is described in the last paragraphs. The Provincial Governments collect the land tax, trade licences, and other items, and give little or nothing back to the people. Schoolmasters' salaries are often — perhaps generally — in arrears, and roads and bridges receive the minimum of attention.

The "loaves and fishes" have to be divided (as spoils of office), and the quantity depends on what is forthcoming from the producer. The party *out* of power complains at the proceedings of that which is *in* power; and those out of the

"swim" at those therein. There is nothing special in this, but when the change comes there is no practical advantage to the producer or the taxpayer. What is wanted in the country is a healthy public opinion, such as in a great measure controls the actions of the Anglo-Saxons; although even among them the greatest sin is to be poor. Here public opinion hardly exists in questions of business morality. If you can keep inside the law and its delays, nobody cares for the rest.

The old system of Spanish judicature actually in force is quite behind the times, and its delays are heart-breaking. The English companies abuse this as much as anybody else, so they have little right to complain. In fact, to powerful corporations, no doubt the antiquated system is an advantage, as it enables them to charge a higher rate of interest in money-lending transactions—on the plea (possibly legitimate) of extra risk.

In any case, they do not scruple to apply all the possible chicanery in their lawsuits. Happily, poor men can make arrangements on the "Dodson and Fogg" principle; otherwise the rich would have it all to themselves. How any alteration can be brought about I do not

know—as the jury system is alien to the character of the people.

The bad qualities of the race come out whenever political matters are broached; they are quite incapable of an honest election. And this must cause troubles in the future. Quite fifteen years ago a very far-seeing Englishman, who had held a position which brought him into constant contact with the best men, said: "They will never alter." Certainly no change for the better has taken place since then. "The more it changes, the more it is the same thing," says the French proverb. Rarely do we see a native above the labourer class who is willing to do a real good day's work with his hands. That is left for the foreigner. They resemble the Irish in that they are quick to comprehend and very intelligent, astute, and endowed with "the gift of the gab." Brilliant they are in a sense, in comparison with the Northern European nations, but never plodding like, say, a Scotchman.

To suppose that an educated man can be gammoned is to go on the wrong scent. He may twist and turn his views, and even "argue black is white," but it is not from being ignorant of the rights of the case, or the colour in view.

Together with a sagacity (and astuteness where Indian blood is present) resembling a lawyer's, he has a wee-bit of the Hebrew in his composition, money-lending on mortgage being a favourite method of raking in the shekels. At one time nearly every fine house had a shop in the basement, but rented. As a shopkeeper he is a decided failure, being too good-hearted, and trusting his friends until ruin overtakes him. An hotel run by a native would be a free house, at least to his relations.

I am perfectly sure that the law of conscription will be dodged by most of the wealthier classes. There are so many "ways out" that their sagacity will certainly find a loophole.

How the authorities can expect to board and feed the men at the present contract price I cannot imagine. I know that labourers at one place near a military centre cost just twice the figure, and how about the profit to the army contractor?

I have heard doleful complaints from Englishmen who have had the misfortune to have sons born in the Republic. I say this with deep regret. Of course the law cannot be evaded by the lower orders, and it would be rather a

judgment on the others if these rounded on them later on. In this case many of them would go on a pleasure trip to Europe.

The race of *gauchos* of my boyhood were as fine a set of men for fighting as could be found anywhere. Unfortunately, as they fought duels with knives, a number of them were killed, and thus they got a bad name which otherwise was hardly merited. If we read of the goings-on of the cowboys ("painting the towns red"), mining camps, and others of the Western States of North America, we are bound to admit that these were as lawless as the Spanish races under similar conditions. I should say decidedly more so, as during quite ten years' sojourn at different times in the outlying districts with hundreds of men, I saw only one man who was mortally wounded in a fight. As a matter of fact, modern surgical science would have saved his life, as he died of gangrene. I think that this experience would compare favourably with any thinly populated Anglo-Saxon country.

Our race has a large capacity for cant, and the fact that the perpetrators of such actions did not, with us, as a rule, escape the consequences of such misdeeds, did not help the victims, and

had little effect on the subsequent proceedings, which went merrily on.

In like conditions all men are lawless, and those that drink most are the most dangerous. I have never felt any insecurity when surrounded by native *peones*, and must confess that to carry arms is so irksome and (to my mind) senseless, that I am far too careless in that respect. In Patagonia I carried nothing. "You may never want it; but if you do, you'll want it pretty darned much," said a Texan to me on a rather awkward occasion.

The lower orders are often subjected to great injustice, and I think that their conduct under such provocation is surprisingly forbearing, provided always that no bad language or blows are mingled with the actions of the other parties. These they will not stand—and small blame to them. An English or Yankee mate is given to strong language, which would be more dangerous if used to *gauchos* than declining to pay them their dues, or sacking and evicting them without any warning. A bully had better stop away.

To sum up, I think that a man who keeps away from low drinking shops *(pulperias)*, and treats the *gaucho* as a man and on "the neigh-

bour as yourself" principle, has very little to fear.

The superior men, when clothed in a little brief authority, compare very well with our countrymen out here, who as a rule are not far up in the scale of society.

As to the morals of the nation, I know far too much about our own to throw the first (or any) stone at anybody.

The captain of a French mail steamer, who moved in good society, told me that on his first visit to England he thought his male acquaintances were of a saintly type; on his second that they were sinners; and finally, that they were neither better nor worse than the rest of mankind. I fancy his "head was level."

The Government encourages gambling by permitting lotteries; and in Australia public opinion permits the sale of tickets on horse races, which are said to demoralise the nation. I fail to see any difference between the two.

The only difference between the Argentine women and ours appears to be that the former would do many things, but have not been taught how, and the latter have been taught how, and do very little or nothing. I speak in general. The former know how to dress, and

have a good deal of grace. Neither of these things obtains as a rule with the latter. At one time you could know an Englishwoman by her "get up" and stately (or other) walk. They have much improved of late years, and have corns in consequence.

Probably on being married they all know very little about the "running" of a house; but the Englishwoman has more physique than the other. Both are the prey of unprincipled tradesmen and of servants, and neither know how much they owe or why. To go beyond a simple cash account is a thing almost unknown. It seems to me a pity that girls are not taught a little more, say, on the lines of the German housewife. I don't mean to the same extent.

Of late years football has become the national pastime among the youths of the cities. This is due in a great measure to Mr. F. C. Boutell, whose influence in Government circles enabled him to bring the matter before the principal men.

Its popularity will have a most salutary effect on the great number of men of sedentary occupation, who in all countries are wanting in physical development. Mr. Boutell has always taken great interest in sports and pastimes among

our countrymen, and the extension of his meritorious action to the native element is in accordance with his principle of *mens sana in corpore sano*.

More power to his elbow in the struggle against effeminate exercise round the billiard table and "dignity balls." Let the young men try the horizontal bar in place of the drinking one.

THE END.